HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development

Small Group Development

Loneliness in the Priesthood

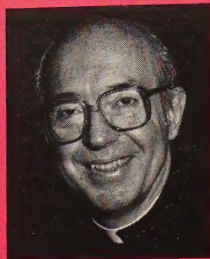**Intimacy in a Celibate Community**

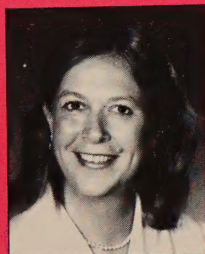**Initial Formation Ministry**

The Brain and Religion

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Letters to the editor and all other correspondence may be sent to HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, The Institute of Living, 400 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106. (203) 241-8041.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The editors are pleased to consider for publication articles relating to the ongoing work of those involved in helping other people through religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, and counseling.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the Executive Editor, Linda Amadeo, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, The Institute of Living, 400 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106. Copy should be typewritten double-spaced on 8½ × 11 inch white paper, 70 characters per line and 28 lines per page. Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 pages) with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Illustrations, if any, should be sumitted as high-quality, glossy, unmounted black and white photographic prints. Do not send original artwork.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Book reviews, which should not exceed 600 words in length, should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Jon O'Brien, S.J., D.O., Jesuit Community, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057.

Unaccepted manuscripts will not be returned unless requested and submitted with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

Editorial Office: (203) 241-8041

OPEN YOUR PRESENTS SLOWLY, THOUGHTFULLY

As this issue of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT goes to press, the world has already begun its preparations for Christmas. Millions of people have made plane and train reservations, decorated trees with tinsel and ornaments, wrapped presents to give to their loved ones, and mailed cards to convey their greetings everywhere in the world. Our season is so full of such traditional events that we may perhaps be tempted to take them all a little too much for granted.

It is easy, for instance, to overlook the fact that there was a time when no planes or trains existed to carry us home, no mail service delivered our presents, and no printing presses transferred the sentiments of our hearts onto greeting cards. Christmas brings with it so many things that shouldn't be taken for granted that one might wish that some way could be found to sharpen our appreciation of all the blessings that enrich this season, not to mention all the seasons, of our lives. Unfortunately, the more times we experience something—even Christmas—the harder it can be to perceive what is so marvelous about it.

Perhaps if we knew we could have only one encounter with an object or situation, we would be more aware of what is happening, more amazed and excited by it, and more grateful for its being a part of our life. Suppose there were only one mountain, or one tree, in the whole world. People would walk or ride countless miles to observe it, and they would regard it with wonder. If on the seven continents there were only a single electric light, radio, television set, or cinema, our curiosity would impel us to travel for days to behold it, just as our hunger for beauty would drive us to search for the one orchestra or to look for the one sunrise, if no second chance could ever be ours. And if life provided the opportunity to experience just one snowfall, one rainbow, one telephone call, one hour of eyesight, or one nighttime glimpse of the moon and stars, how precious would such events seem to us, and how cherished would they be among our memories!

I fear that most of our lives are like Christmas stockings stuffed with too many of everything—too many flowers, bird songs, meals, glass windows, conversations, newspapers, warm baths, liturgies, football games, gas-tank refills, changes of season, and sunsets. So many that we fail to consider what marvels they all are.

But the Christmas season gives us the opportunity to stop taking for granted, and to begin appreciating, the God-given people, events, and objects that fill our lives. As you open each Christmas card, think about the sender for a while, as well as the specific blessings she or he has brought into your life. Ask yourself: Have I been taking his or her friendship or love for granted and not taking time to appreciate it for all it is worth to me? Each Christmas present, too, deserves a slow and considerate unwrapping. Think about the person who picked it out especially for you, tied it with a ribbon that symbolizes a lasting bond with you, and gave it as a sign of deep affection. Try to focus your attention on the person behind the present—the one whose friendship or love is itself a gift more precious than all the material objects in the entire universe.

Christmas is also the appropriate time to pause and recognize our Creator as the Love within the gifts we receive all year long through Nature and through all the wonderful inventions of human minds and hearts. Nothing on earth—no person, no object, no event—could ever be a part of our lives if God were not present and actively giving it existence as an expression of God's infinite, constant, and tender affection for us. Christmas reminds us

that we should be happily and gratefully basking in that Love always.

For most of us, the fact that Christmas comprises so many events probably makes it difficult rather than easy to contemplate all the symbolism, mysteries, and love the day conveys. That is why we need the entire season that envelops it. But for us to become fully appreciative of the meaning of our Savior's birthday, this year's Christmas season and all the seasons of our lifetimes will never be enough. We will need all of eternity in order to fathom the depths of Love that Mary and Joseph unveiled to us in Bethlehem on that silent, holy night.

All of us involved in the publication of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT wish you a Christmas season and a new year that will fill your heart to the brim with gratitude. When that happens to you—as we all know from experience—love and joy beyond description are certain to result and abound.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Suggestions on Combating Insomnia

A recent national survey found that one third of the U.S. population reported some degree of insomnia, and half of this group—17 percent of the population—considered it to be a serious problem. Thomas Roth, Ph.D., director of the Sleep Disorders and Research Center at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, makes the following recommendations on how to ensure a good night's sleep every night.

Follow a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed at the same time each day. More importantly, get up at the same time each morning during the week and on weekends.

Establish a bedtime routine. A regular pattern of activities—brushing teeth, washing, setting the alarm clock—can set the mood for sleep. Follow this routine every night, at home or away.

Maintain the proper sleep environment. The bedroom should be dark and quiet, and not too warm or too cold.

Use the bedroom primarily as a place for sleep. Do not use it for eating, reading, watching television, paying bills, or other activities associated with wakefulness.

Avoid substances that interfere with sleep. Caffeine and alcohol can interfere with sleep, so avoid food and beverages that contain these substances, especially near bedtime.

Exercise regularly. Exercise can help you fall asleep naturally. Avoid exercise in the late evening, however. It can stimulate the cardiovascular and nervous systems and keep you awake.

Relax. Stress and worry are major impediments to sleep. If you are not sleepy at bedtime, read for a while, or take a warm bath. Try to "leave your troubles at the bedroom door."

The Ministry
of
Initial Formation

Joel Giallanza, C.S.C., M.A.

The ministry of initial formation centers around the task of vocational discernment. Everything that formators do, through program and process, is designed to support the decision that candidates and novices are called to make concerning their continuing vocation to religious life. The supporting role that formators play in this discernment engages them in a sublime, even sacred, responsibility. Admittedly, some tasks are more immediately related to vocational discernment than others; nevertheless, the entire ministry of formators is at the service of that goal.

Formation, however, is more than the collection of programs and processes that compose its external forum. It also includes the internal forum of formators' experiences, feelings, reactions, and concerns that emerge as those programs and processes unfold. This internal forum is less quantitative than the external forum and thus may not be recognized as capable of affecting, for better or for worse, the formators' role in vocational discernment.

My reflections here will focus on four experiences within the internal forum that are common to the initial formation ministry. To characterize these experiences as common to formation is not to imply that they are necessarily frequent or regularly recurring. The first two are usually more frequent than the second two. If there is any progression to be noted at the beginning of these reflections, it is that these experiences will be

presented in order of increasing intensity—that is, the increasing amount of affective time and energy they demand of formators.

CHOOSING TO DEPART

An experience with which initial formation personnel are quite familiar occurs each time candidates or novices choose, on their own initiative, to discontinue their pursuit of religious life. The reasons underlying a person's decision in this regard may be as many and varied as his or her reasons for originally seeking incorporation into religious life. However, the identification and exploration of the reasons for departure are not within the scope of the present reflections. The primary concern here is to note the formator's experience.

Formators may not be able to resist smiling a bit when they think of candidates or novices who have departed on their own initiative. That smile may be an expression of the wish that the discernment process were equally clear and uncomplicated for everyone involved in initial formation. But the truth is that such a smile is warranted only when the formators agreed with the individual's decision to discontinue the process of incorporation. In such cases there are feelings of relief, most notably if the departing person has been particularly difficult to get along with, and peace, most notably if the departing person has discovered new insights

into his or her identity and gifts and call from the Lord.

Similarly, the candidates or novices remaining in the program may also experience feelings of relief and peace. Even though some separation anxiety may need to be addressed as the formation community reestablishes itself with fewer members, formators must reaffirm for themselves and for the candidates or novices that the discernment process is alive, well, and working.

Formators, however, do not always agree with the departure of a particular candidate or novice. They may not be so prone to smile when they recall an insufficiently comprehended, awkwardly communicated, or hastily completed departure. Poor timing may also be a factor in the overall effect of a departure. Formators may instinctively feel that there must have been something they could have done to nurture and further support the departed individual's developing vocation.

Similarly, the candidates or novices remaining in the program may also experience the frustration of not knowing much about a person's decision to depart, as well as the confusion caused by an unexpected departure. That frustration and confusion may distort the candidates' or novices' perspectives on their own vocations. Along with the inevitable separation anxiety, frustration and confusion should be recognized and discussed as the formation community reestablishes itself and continues on its way.

Depending on the specifics surrounding an individual's choice to leave a formation program, formators may experience a wide range of feelings and reactions. The challenge, as always, is to recognize that the Lord continues to work in that person's life. Jesus himself may have had similar experiences as he responded to those who wanted to follow him. His encounter with the rich young man, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Mark's gospel, is an interesting example. The young man, eager to share in eternal life, asks Jesus to identify the means to achieve that life. After Jesus cites the commandments, the young man—no doubt feeling a sense of accomplishment—proclaims that he has obeyed them since childhood. Jesus then presents a further challenge.

> Jesus looked straight at him with love and said, "You need only one thing. Go sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me." When the man heard this, gloom spread over his face, and he went away sad, because he was very rich.
>
> (verses 21–22)

This challenge is too much for the man's personality and life-style to bear.

It is unfortunate that the gospel does not offer us a glimpse into Jesus' feelings when the man "went away sad"; that glimpse might have provided a model for formators' experiences. Jesus must have seen the young man's potential for meeting the challenge, and he must have felt some disappointment when the challenge was left unaddressed. Though it is not articulated in the gospel story, Jesus' own sensitivity could have led him to wonder if the challenge was understood, if it could have been clarified, if it was attainable. Consistent with the forcefulness of his teaching and the integrity of his life, Jesus continued to teach the same lesson to his disciples after the young man departed. It is not surprising to find that the disciples exclaimed, "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus' response is equally direct: "Everything is possible for God."

After a candidate or novice departs on his or her own initiative, formators must remind themselves that formation is the Lord's work. Provided that formators approach their ministry with consistency and integrity, they can trust that the Lord does indeed continue to work in the person and that he or she will eventually discover the way to live out his or her call to follow the Lord.

FORMATORS MAY DECIDE

An experience with which initial formation personnel may never become comfortably familiar occurs each time they tell a candidate or novice to discontinue his or her pursuit of religious life. The reasons underlying such an action center around the formators' observations and concerns that an individual is unable or unwilling to live up to the fundamental expectations of religious life in general or of the institute in particular.

A principal function of formation ministry is to determine suitability (i.e., capability and willingness) for incorporation into a religious institute. In fulfilling this function, formators have an obligation to provide candidates or novices with the appropriate information and to foster the development of the skills necessary for eventual incorporation. Candidates and novices are obliged to make sincere, serious efforts to assimilate that information and use those skills. Together, formators and those in formation determine whether those efforts are pointing in the direction of incorporation.

No doubt, many formators will read the last paragraph and think, "Well, that's the way it works—in theory!" The fact is that suitability for religious life, more often than not, is intangible. Admittedly, there are certain behaviors and expectations associated with a healthy and balanced life of ministry, prayer, community, and the vows. But formators also acknowledge that suitability for religious life is expressed through candidates' and novices' approaches to, and attitudes toward, those practices and expectations. Sometimes the intangibles speak much louder and clearer than the

tangibles; the doings of the hands do not always accurately reveal the designs of the heart.

All of this contributes to the feelings that emerge when formators decide to tell a candidate or novice that he or she must depart. The interview in which this message is communicated can be emotionally (and thus physically and spiritually) draining for the formators. The easiest scenario to handle is that in which the person is waiting to be told and is actually relieved when the message is delivered. Such a candidate or novice might never have come to the decision to depart on his or her own, even though that decision might have seemed increasingly appropriate as time passed. Formators, then, provide the impetus for a person in formation to act on that decision.

This scenario, however, is not the norm. The response of the candidate or novice may be more along the lines of disappointment or discouragement or resistance or rage. Formators must be prepared for whatever response emerges. It is beyond the scope of these reflections to focus on the response of the candidate or novice; nevertheless, one note must be made here. Whatever the response, formators must take care that their message does not diminish the person's self-image or self-esteem. The decision to tell a person to depart from a formation program is never an evaluation of his or her worth, goodness, or lovableness. Formators may well understand this; the point is that the person hearing the message of departure must also understand it. Formators must take the time to explore the meaning of the person's response and to be as clear and fair as possible in explaining the decision that has been made. There is no guarantee that the decision will be accepted, but formators should make every effort to state clearly what led to it, even though there will be times when the person refuses to listen.

DEPARTURES RAISE QUESTIONS

Once the message has been delivered and the person has departed, formators must be attentive to their own reactions as well as those of the remaining candidates or novices. As for themselves, formators may be haunted by some recurring questions: Did we do the right thing? Were we fair? Were we clear? What else could we have done? Such questions are worthy of consideration, but formators should not dismiss the value of their own observations and intuitions. If prolonged questioning, second-guessing, and introspection lead to persistent uncertainty or immobility, then formators will be of little service to the other candidates or novices. In faith, formators must trust the decision that was made and then turn their attention to the effects of the departure on the formation community so that the discernment process can continue.

Sometimes the intangibles speak much louder and clearer than the tangibles

When someone departs from a formation program at the formators' initiative, those remaining in the program may have one of two responses. On the one hand, formators either sense or are told directly that the decision was a good one. All or some of the remaining candidates or novices seem to be saying, "We knew that person had to go. We were wondering when you'd get around to it." Even if this is not a unanimous sentiment, it is affirming for formators. While the weight of this affirmation should not be exaggerated, formators should recognize and acknowledge that others shared their intuitions.

On the other hand, however, formators either sense or are told directly that the decision was not a good one. All or some of those remaining seem to be saying, "You made a big mistake. We're not sure we can trust you anymore." Even if this is not a unanimous sentiment, it is unsettling for formators. As with affirmation, the weight of such disagreement should not be exaggerated; nonetheless, formators should recognize and acknowledge that their perspective does not have universal support. However, formators must keep in mind that they do bear the responsibility to make such decisions in the name of the institute. Formators need not and should not set out to prove their trustworthiness to candidates or novices who disagree with their decisions. In fact, it is the obligation of the candidates or novices to demonstrate their own trust and willingness to continue their vocational discernment with the formators.

Affirmation and disagreement may also be heard from the ranks of the professed community members as they learn of the departure. Only two points will be noted here, particularly regarding disagreement. First, formators must reaffirm that they are

Sometimes Deep Disagreement Occurs at the Weekly Formators' Meeting

People like him always quit in the long run. I recommend we let him go.

I say keep him. I'm sure he'll catch on pretty soon.

We would be doing him a favor to send him home right now.

I'm for giving him a longer opportunity. He just needs a little more time.
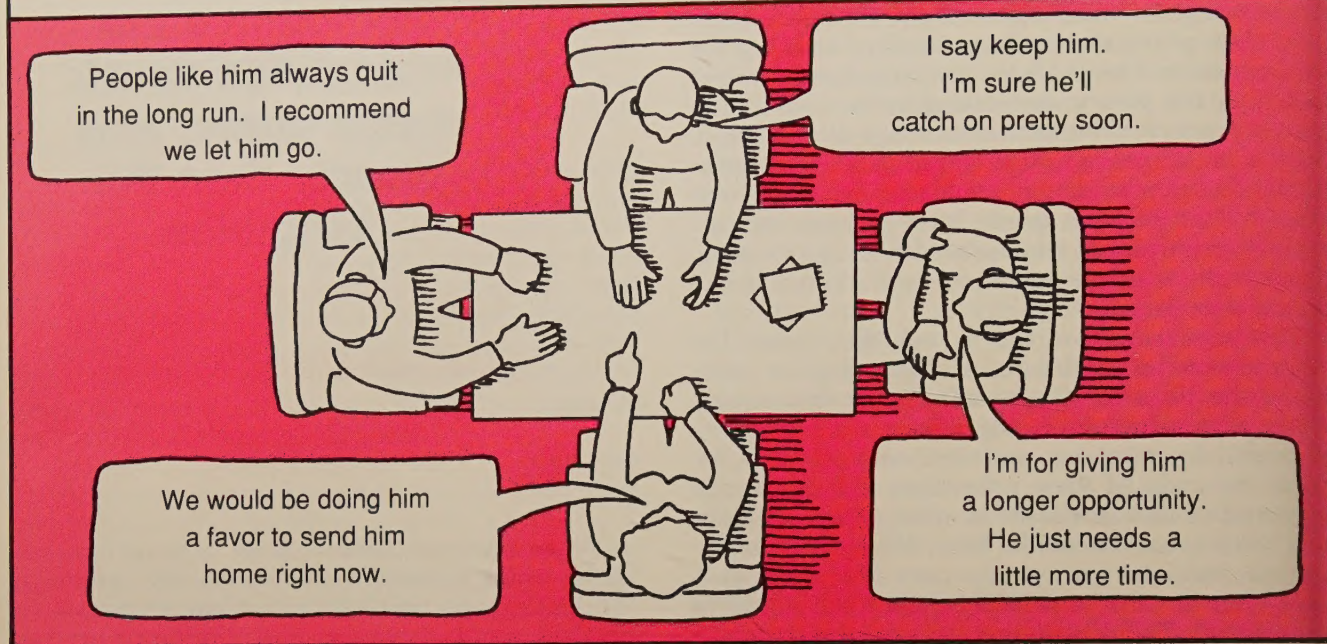
invested with the responsibility—and authority—to make whatever decisions are necessary for the good of those in formation. Endless justifications from formators usually invite more disagreement because community members often view departures as contributing to the pressing problem of diminishing vocations. Second, formators must clearly explain the specifics of the situation to those in authority and ask for their continued support.

It seems that Jesus himself made such a decision. The fifth chapter of Mark's gospel presents a dramatic encounter between Jesus and a possessed man he has just healed.

> As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been freed of the demons begged him, "Let me go with you!" But Jesus would not let him; he told him, "Go back home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how kind he has been to you."
> (verses 18–19)

The gospel does not record any affirmation or disagreement on the part of the disciples, nor does it tell of the man's reaction to Jesus' decision. Still, there is a lesson here for formators. Jesus focuses on God's continuing presence and activity in the man's life and so encourages him to use that experience as the basis of his mission to others. Indeed,

his mission is quite effective; as the gospel records, "all who heard it were amazed" (verse 20). Even as formators must sometimes make the decision to tell a candidate or novice to depart, so too must they remind that person of the Lord's work in his or her life and challenge that person to continue to live as a follower of Jesus by sharing and supporting his or her faith with others.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE COMPLICATED

No single category characterizes completely the relationship between formators and candidates or novices; in fact, several relationships unfold at once within the formation environment. First, there is the relationship of teacher to student. Formators bear the responsibility of communicating information about religious life and transmitting the values of the institute. The responsibility of those in formation is to assimilate that information and those values as supports for life in the institute. Second, there is the relationship of spiritual director to directee. Even though the formal spiritual directors for the candidates or novices may (and often do) live outside the formation community, formators bear the responsibility of overseeing and supporting the progress of those in formation. The responsibility of candidates and novices is to be attentive to the recommendations and suggestions

offered and to apply them for continued growth. Third, there is the relationship of role model to observer and learner. Formators bear the responsibility to consistently strive at living what they profess through integrity in attitudes, motivations, and behaviors. The responsibility of those in formation is not to mimic formators but to examine and evaluate their own growth in integrity in light of the principles presented and witnessed in daily life. Fourth, there is the relationship of community member to community member. Formators and candidates or novices bear a common responsibility for the tasks of everyday life in the formation community, including housekeeping, clear and fair communication, leadership in prayer, and hospitality. Together, they move toward becoming brothers or sisters to one another.

If formators are to invite the trust necessary for the candidates' or novices' vocational discernment, they must acknowledge and accept the various relationships that are part of their ministry to those in formation. Through these relationships, formators sharpen their knowledge and deepen their understanding of each candidate or novice; this in turn enables them to offer appropriate guidance and set achievable goals. At the same time, those in formation develop an awareness of everyday religious life and determine their willingness to live it; this gives them a realistic perspective on the decision they must make.

CLOSENESS AFFECTS DISCERNMENT

No specific mention has been made thus far of peer relationships, although the aforementioned relationship of community member to community member is probably closest, or at least is the usual forum for affective relationships. Formators will generally acknowledge the experience of becoming affectively close to or distant from individual candidates or novices. Unlike any experiences surrounding the relationships cited above, this experience of closeness or distance has a distinct influence on the formators' role in the process of discernment. For the purpose of these reflections, only the main lines of that influence will be noted.

When formators experience either closeness to or distance from particular candidates or novices, their objectivity may be compromised. In becoming affectively close, formators develop friendship bonds that may emotionally complicate the importance of providing those in formation with the affirmations and direct challenges necessary for effective discernment. This complication can become especially awkward during periods of evaluation or in other circumstances directly related to determining a person's suitability for continuing in the formation program. Affirmations may be overstated and challenges for change minimized. In becoming affectively distant, formators may de-

velop patterns of reacting that make them fail to recognize an individual's total personality. As a result, they may categorize a person as having characteristics that make him or her unacceptable for admission to incorporation. Formators with this bias may pose unrealistic challenges or offer only nominal affirmations of the individual's progress.

Whether they involve feelings of closeness or distance, affective relationships can interfere with, and may even jeopardize, the formator's role in vocational discernment. Formation does not serve well as a setting for the establishment and development of affective peer-level relationships between formators and those in formation. Even though such relationships should be encouraged and developed among the candidates or novices, this does not relegate formators to the ranks of aloof and uninterested observers. Formators cannot avoid entering into relationships with those in formation and still sustain a supportive role in the discernment and decision regarding vocation. The challenge here is for formators to recall and maintain the priorities of their ministry.

FORMATORS NEED SUPPORT

The means by which formators take up this challenge depend on the nature of the program in which they are involved. If formation is handled through a team approach, then the formators can give tremendous support to one another by regularly discussing their perspectives on, reactions to, and feelings about the candidates or novices, the program itself, and their experiences within the program. If the program uses a single formator, then he or she must maintain regular contact with friends and peers who can provide support, per-

The presence of difficulties and disagreements does not automatically cast doubts on the quality of the formation program

spective, and a healthy outlet for the formator's affective needs.

Whatever relationships develop between formators and those in formation, the priority of continuing vocational discernment must be maintained. If any relationship produces a shift in the focus and function of the program from the needs of the candidates or novices to those of the formators, then the program no longer facilitates discernment. Everything that happens within the formation environment must be directed (at least by intention and design) toward discernment as a primary task of formation ministry. Such a statement admittedly reflects an ideal; nevertheless, that ideal will have a very real influence on the future of religious life.

DISAGREEMENTS WILL OCCUR

Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit our brothers in every town where we preached the word of the Lord, and let us find out how they are getting along." Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them, but Paul did not think it was right to take him, because he had not stayed with them to the end of their mission, but had turned back and left them in Pamphylia. There was a sharp argument, and they separated: Barnabas took Mark and sailed off for Cyprus, while Paul chose Silas and left for Syria and Cilicia.

(Acts 15:36–41)

A less than edifying story, to say the least! And this is not the only serious difference of opinion in which Paul was involved; his public reprimand of Peter at Antioch is recorded in Galatians 2:11–14. If more than one such "sharp argument" could happen between apostles, it can certainly happen between formators. The intensity of formation ministry and the demands it places on the physical, emotional, and spiritual energies of formators raise the possibility of relationship difficulties and ministerial disagreements between formators. The roots of this may lie in significant differences of opinion concerning the program or some aspect of it, or the progress and suitability of individual candidates or novices. Similar disagreements may occur between formators and the authorities who make the final decisions regarding incorporation.

Difficulties and disagreements between formators and either their peers or those in authority should be identified and acknowledged at the first signs of their appearance. Addressing these problems may take some time and involve consultation to clarify and coordinate expectations and efforts. Any attempt at subterfuge will only magnify the tension and make it more noticeable to the candidates or novices. In addition, the formators may begin to give mixed messages to those in formation. Vocational discernment will never be served if the candidates or novices become a battleground used by the formators to decide a dispute or prove a point.

In confronting difficulties and disagreements, formators should not pretend that there is no tension or that nothing is wrong. Candidates and novices are generally too observant to miss a shift in mood or tone within the formation community, which formators often quite accurately liken to life in a fishbowl. However, even in tense times, formators—whether or not they realize it—do provide valuable role-modeling for those in formation. It serves no purpose for formators to circumnavigate difficulties and disagreements as if to say that they should not occur in religious life. Such a romantic picture of religious life does not equip candidates and novices with a realistic model for their own future in community and ministry. It serves no purpose for formators to allow difficulties and disagreements to deteriorate into divisions as if to say that reconciliation is not worth the effort. Such a fatalistic picture of religious life does not provide those in formation with a positive model of constructive communication with others.

The presence of difficulties and disagreements does not automatically cast doubts on the quality of the formation program or the ability of the formators. At times it may indicate that the program and the formators are doing exactly what they must do: raise questions and identify issues and concerns that need attention and clarification. At other times, admittedly, the presence of difficulties and disagreements may clearly signal a breakdown in communication. In either case, the problems need to be addressed before the vocational discernment of the candidates or novices is

compromised or counteracted. Whatever the issue, and whatever may need to be done to bring about a resolution, formators must maintain the priorities of their ministry to those in formation.

RESOLUTIONS MUST BE SOUGHT

It is true, as we saw at the beginning of this section, that serious differences of opinion were not unknown between leaders of the early church. But it is also true that those same leaders must have sought resolutions to their differences in order to maintain the priorities of their mission. Years after his altercation with Barnabas concerning Mark, Paul wrote to Timothy: "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he can help me in the work" (2 Tim. 4:11). No record is preserved of what transpired in the intervening years, but Paul must have come to appreciate Mark in a different light. Such is the challenge for formators in the face of difficulties and disagreements, whether among themselves or with those in authority: to continue the mission, to address whatever does not serve that mission, to respect their own convictions and yet be open to other perspectives, to be willing to see things in another light so that all may work together to discover and support the presence and activity of the Lord in those who seek incorporation—those who will be the future of religious life.

FORMATION IS LORD'S WORK

These four experiences that we have examined are surely not the only ones that formators confront, but they do consume time and energy and have a definite influence on formation ministry. Departures, whether at the initiative of those in formation or the formators, sharpen formators' sensitivities and perceptions concerning the suitability of those seeking incorporation. Clearly, departures are not the only contexts in which the criteria for suitability should be examined, but they do bring those criteria into bold relief. Relationships on all levels characterize the function of formators within the ministry. Relationships that do not support and serve the formators' primary function as facilitators of vocational discernment must be examined in terms of their appropriateness. Difficulties and disagreements, regardless of their extent and intensity, call for a reaffirmation of the priorities of the formators and the program. While they are not an absolute sign that priorities have been compromised, difficulties and disagreements may signal the need to restate priorities and clarify the expectations related to them.

Whatever experiences emerge—and formators acknowledge that they are many and varied—formation ever remains the Lord's own work. The Lord chooses and calls; formators echo the choice and amplify the call. The Lord sustains and strengthens; formators provide the means to draw upon the sustenance and build upon the strength. The Lord is at the center of every vocation; formators serve as passageways to that dwelling place. In their ministry, formators seek to discover the way of the Lord as it unfolds in the lives of candidates and novices. In their ministry, formators recognize and experience that "the wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Truly, it is like that in the ministry of initial formation.

Joel Giallanza, C.S.C., M.A., is a member of the provincial administration of the South-West Province of the Brothers of the Holy Cross. He has responsibility for formation and corporate renewal.

Loneliness in the Priesthood

Jeanne L. George, Ph.D.

Loneliness is an experience with which most individuals are familiar. However, when people describe their experiences of loneliness, it is evident that one person's definition of loneliness is not the same as another's. In the literature on the subject, religious writers tend to focus on loneliness as an opportunity and invitation to come closer to God. Philosophical and inspirational writers explore the existential purpose of loneliness and suggest that periods of loneliness are necessary for self-awareness and for coming to terms with one's essential aloneness in the world. Other writers view loneliness as the longing for another or the absence of intimacy in one's relationships.

On the far end of the spectrum of lonely people are those who despair in their loneliness and live in a quiet desperation that may or may not be masked by workaholism or the veneer of social skills. Such people describe their loneliness in terms of emptiness and desperate pain, as a hole inside them that can never be filled. They feel forever locked outside the candy store, their faces pressed against the glass, watching those inside with jealous longing. And they experience their loneliness as constant, permanent, and beyond their control.

It is debatable whether the label "loneliness" applies to all these experiences. Indeed, attempts to define, label, and clarify terminology constitute a large part of the scientific literature on the subject. And the issue is far from being resolved; there is no generally accepted definition of loneliness. How-

ever, common to all the experiences described above is a longing or need to be emotionally related to others.

Most major theories of personality emphasize the role of emotional relationships in personality development, particularly in the interaction of child with mother or primary caretaker. However, behavioral and social scientists have only recently linked loneliness to personality variables. So far their findings suggest that there are important differences between people who experience only occasional loneliness under certain circumstances and those who feel painfully lonely most or all of the time. Since loneliness has long been recognized as a major source of stress among celibate priests, it is important to consider the implications these findings have for the selection, formation, and life-style of the clergy, and particularly diocesan priests.

Data on the prevalence of loneliness in the general population are fairly consistent across a number of large studies. Less than 10 percent of the population report that they have never been lonely; in most studies, this figure is more likely to be around 1 or 2 percent. This means that at least 90 percent of the population have been lonely at some time in their lives. At least 75 percent of these people report that they have felt lonely sometimes or often, and at any given point in time approximately 25 percent of the American population will report that they feel severely or painfully lonely

Considering the extent to which celibates are at risk for emotional isolation and the absence of significant relationships, the percentages in their group may be even higher.

RESEARCH REVEALS TYPES

Robert Weiss of the Harvard Medical School's Laboratory of Community Psychology was one of the first to write about loneliness and to suggest that it comes in various forms. In his book *The Experience of Emotional and Social Isolation*, he characterizes the loneliness of emotional isolation and the loneliness of social isolation. He maintains that loneliness is always a response to the absence of some particular desired type of relationship. He defines emotional isolation as the response to the absence of close, intimate attachments. He compares the experience of emotional isolation to the distress of a small child who fears abandonment by his or her parents, and suggests that in adults this distress stems from a reexperiencing of anxiety produced by childhood abandonment. This type of loneliness may give rise to a pervasive sense of apprehension and hypervigilance. Weiss notes that individuals experiencing the loneliness of emotional isolation seem to feel utterly alone, regardless of whether or not other types of companionship are available. He concludes that this type of loneliness can be remedied only by "the integration of another emotional attachment or the reintegration of the one that had been lost."

Weiss describes the loneliness of social isolation as a response to "the absence of the provisions of meaningful friendships, collegial relationships, or other linkages to a coherent community." The symptoms of social isolation are boredom, aimlessness, and feelings of marginality. He compares these to the feelings of a child whose friends are all away, and maintains that this type of loneliness is relieved by finding a network or a group that will accept one as a valued member.

Subsequent researchers have focused on the difference between the transient, situationally related loneliness that everyone seems to experience from time to time and the persistent, recurring, and desperate feeling that is conceptualized as chronic loneliness. Within this context, it is hypothesized that transient and chronic loneliness are two different but related phenomena that emerge out of the innate need of humans to be related emotionally to others. Transient loneliness is considered to be a normal experience. People who are transiently lonely are able to form secure emotional relationships with others and, when these relationships are interrupted or lost, to establish other secure emotional relationships within a reasonable period of time. This is not to say that transient loneliness may not be intensely painful; it is simply to say that this sort of loneliness is not permanent or frequently recurring.

Chronic loneliness is believed to be an aberration of the need to be emotionally related. It is a pathological condition that results from an impairment of the ability to be securely related or attached to others. Chronically lonely people do not seem to be able to form secure emotional relationships. The key word here is *secure*. Such people may perceive their relationship as conditional or tenuous, or they may form intense dependencies on others. There is always the underlying fear of abandonment or rejection, of being cast out and alone. The chronically lonely person may experience a temporary reprieve from loneliness in a passionate infatuation or in a dependent relationship with someone who is willing to take care of him or her. Such relationships usually do not last or continue to be satisfying among adults. Most often, the chronically lonely person is either unattached or feels lonely and isolated in his or her relationships. Chronically lonely people may withdraw into passivity and social isolation, or they may try to distract themselves with work or the frantic pursuit of pleasure. They often turn to alcohol and drugs for escape.

As for viewing loneliness as an invitation from God or an opportunity to develop self-awareness, chronically lonely people usually cannot believe that anyone, including God, truly wants to invite them to anything or cares whether or not they accept. Even when others extend themselves, they are afraid of accepting for fear that the others will turn away or leave. Their sense of self is usually poor.

PRECONDITION FOR RELATIONSHIPS

There is considerable theoretical and empirical support for the argument that all humans have an innate need to be emotionally related. In fact, rather compelling evidence collected by John Bowlby suggests that the need to form affectional bonds is biologically based. From the moment of birth—and, some say, even before—the infant's perception of self and the world is determined by her or his emotional experience of interactions with others. The most important mediators of this experience are the primary caretakers—usually the parents, but sometimes grandparents, extended family, or nursemaids. As the infant becomes older, teachers and peers become important contributors to his or her self-perception and expectations of others. It is not so much the actual, literal experiences that shape the child as it is the emotional elements and consequences of those experiences. At the risk of being terribly simplistic, it may be said that if the child's emotional experiences are good— if he or she experiences acceptance and support and a reasonable amount of warmth and affection, and is not too restricted in his or her expression of autonomy—then the child will learn to like himself

Signs of Pathological Loneliness

intense dependency
on others

fear of
rejection or
abandonment

a chronic
emotional condition

inability to form
secure relationships

nonlasting,
passionate
infatuations

use of work as
a distraction

escape through
alcohol or drugs

difficulty viewing
God as caring
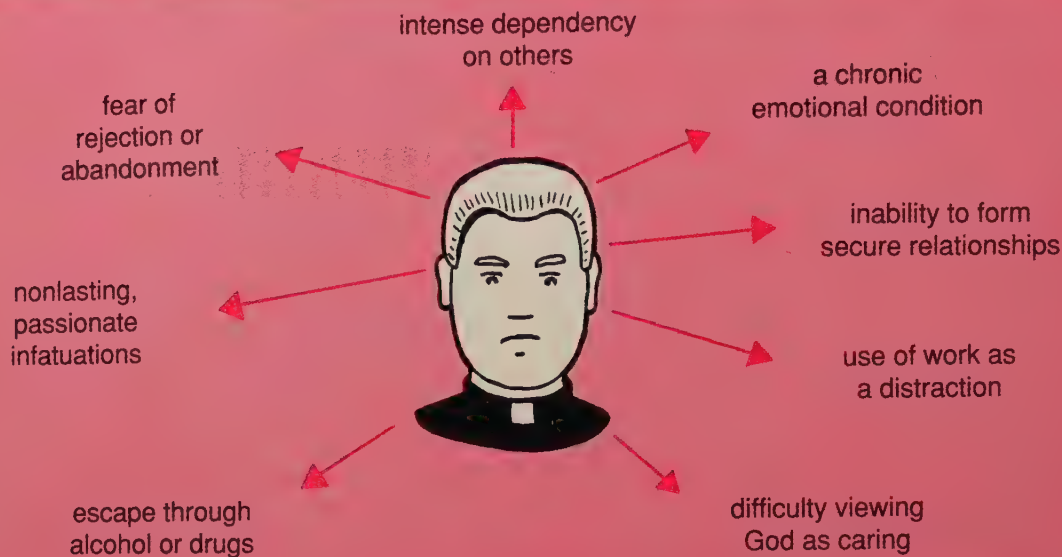
or herself and others and will assume that others will like and value him or her. That seems to be the basic, necessary precondition for the ability to form secure relationships.

If this process is interfered with to an excessive extent, the result is likely to be an impaired ability to form a stable, positive self-concept or to trust others and accurately appraise their interpersonal behavior. Impaired self-concept and mistrust of others increase anxiety. To protect oneself against anxiety, one erects defenses in the form of beliefs, attitudes, or avoidance behaviors. The terrible irony is that these defenses often become the glass window of the candy store that keeps one outside of yearned-for relatedness.

REASON FOR PROBLEMS

If the concept of an innate need to be emotionally related is accepted, it can readily be seen that it has important implications for the selection, formation, and support of clergy and members of religious communities. Loneliness is often cited as one of the major stresses of celibate vocations in the church, particularly among diocesan priests. It is also often cited as a reason for priests' or religious' involvement in alcohol abuse, depression, or sexual relationships, and even their apparent loss of interest in the parish or community and excessive involvement in outside activities.

Considering these facts, it may be that one of the major criteria for evaluating candidates to the priesthood should be their ability to form gratifying emotional relationships. A person who is unable to do so may be dangerously vulnerable in the face of the stresses and barriers to intimacy inherent in the priesthood as currently construed within the church.

An individual who is predisposed to chronic loneliness will find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to sublimate his own intense need for emotional acceptance into a healthy giving of self. At the same time, the chronically lonely person may be more likely to seek a religious or priestly vocation as an escape from his or her interpersonal failure and isolation.

How can a person who is able to form healthy attachments be distinguished from one dominated by an unmet need for attachment? Although it is clear that there is no easy way, appropriate methods must be developed. The process of such assessment should begin when an individual first applies to the seminary and continue throughout the formation program.

RECOGNIZING IMPORTANT SIGNS

At the first stage there are identifiable warning signals that can alert the vocation director to probe more deeply into an applicant's background. These

include parental relationships disturbed by divorce, separation, or death; a history of introversion or isolation from peers; evidence of extreme anxiety or low self-esteem; and strong indications of psychosexual immaturity. Psychological evaluations, already required by most dioceses and communities, could include the assessment of personality factors related to interpersonal dynamics, such as basic trust, self-perception, interest in others, inner needs, and capacity to experience and express emotions. There is no such thing as a screening process that is 100 percent successful; however, since a line does have to be drawn, erring on the side of caution is preferable, for the sake of both the church and the emotional well-being of the individual.

During the formation process, it is important to continue to evaluate a person's relationships and experience with loneliness. Formation programs should foster and promote the development of interpersonal trust and stress the meaning and importance of intimacy. This can be achieved through classes on human development, support groups, the encouragement of friendship, and the support of community life. The availability of therapy is also crucially important. Individuals who appear to have serious difficulty in forming gratifying relationships should be directed to seek therapy with a qualified professional.

ILLNESS MAY RESULT

Moving beyond the selection and formation of candidates, there is the need to recognize that certain problems are inherent in the nature of priesthood. It is often difficult for priests to satisfy their need to be emotionally related to others in the context of celibacy, nonexclusive relationships, and the demands of parish life. Loneliness is a stressor, and a serious one for some. Some people seek to avoid or overcome loneliness by immersing themselves in work and social activities. Some are able to cope with it by turning it into an opportunity for reflection or by consciously trying to place themselves continually in the presence of God. Others may seek new relationships or turn to old ones for support and emotional nurturance. But for the chronically lonely person—one whose capacity to relate to others is impaired—these are simply not

viable options. The experience of prolonged, intense loneliness by a person who feels unable to overcome it can lead to a further breakdown in personality functioning. This can occur through attempts to escape loneliness or can result from the stress of loneliness itself. There is substantial evidence to suggest that intense loneliness is linked to physical problems as well, particularly heart disease. This is not to suggest that loneliness is at the root of all the emotional and physical problems of those in the priesthood or religious life. What is suggested is that prolonged, intense loneliness can be so stressful that it can diminish a person's cognitive and emotional control and that personality flaws or disturbances are then likely to emerge or become exacerbated.

Vocation and formation directors must recognize that some people can manage loneliness with a reasonable amount of support and opportunity for social contact, but others cannot. Special measures are needed, both to relieve the pain of the individual and to avoid tragic consequences to the person, the community, and the church. Figuring out where to start and what to do will not be easy, but the time to begin is past due.

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Intimacy in a Celibate Community

John J. Shea, S.J., Ph.D.

Community life has been a rich topic for discussion during the twenty-five years that I have been in religious life. The definitions are countless and the theories are plentiful, yet the lived reality changes so little. The search for the ideal community is much like the quest for the Holy Grail; it has sparked hopes for some and doused the dreams of others. The problem derives from a certain naiveté and idealism that invade our thinking.

We seem to overlook the fact that we are, first and foremost, human beings. We fail to notice that other community structures outside our own have not fared as well. Divorce is common, and the nuclear family seems endangered. The ethos of individualism and the pursuit of self-fulfillment do not provide the ingredients necessary for group cohesion.

The topic of religious celibacy dovetails with any discussion of community insofar as many discussions of community are really struggles with the issue of celibacy and the quest for intimacy. It is easier to talk about community, as that seems innocent and selfless enough, than to talk about intimacy, which would call attention to our personal vulnerabilities. Therefore, as community, celibacy, and intimacy are often made to appear to be a seamless garment, they shall be considered together here.

NEED FOR COMMUNITY

Relationships are at the heart of the discussion of all these concepts. Who we are emerges from the context of our personal relationships. We move in our developmental history from symbiosis with a nurturing mother to autonomous functioning as an individual. Separation and individuation are the tasks we negotiate. Our interpersonal histories predict and fashion our patterns of future relationships. For some, mature relationships develop; for others, there is the inevitable repetition of self-defeating patterns.

Adolescence is often referred to as the "second individuation." This is clear during the high-school years and most strikingly evident in the move away from home that college often demands. When we leave the family, new circles of significant persons replace the old ones in our lives, even though family overtones are often present. The religious novitiate involves yet another separation, another disengagement, and another search for replacements—some new, others new editions of an old theme. This can be a vulnerable time. The novice forms a new identity, as well as new values and goals. For some, the college seminary years once again represent a vulnerable time. The old group from novitiate may have broken up; its family spirit may have evaporated. The unconditional acceptance experienced in novitiate is replaced by academic measures of performance that may affect one's sense of self-worth. The solitude of the scholar, the reliance on intellectual gratifications, and the challenge of entering yet another new group demands a special type of asceticism.

The college atmosphere and patterns can foster regression—a reliance on habits and ways of be-

having that characterized the seminarians' adolescence. Conflicts between the needs of the group and those of the individual can generate stress. The struggle with solitude and the loneliness that is experienced can exacerbate the struggle with studies, especially philosophy. The need for support and belonging is almost palpable. The lack of gratification is translated into the perennial lament, "We lack community."

It is hoped that needs can be met to some degree in community, but expectations must be realistic enough to prevent frustration, which can lead to disappointment and anger. Intimacy and community are the needs that many feel.

SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY

One area especially worthy of attention is that of intimacy in the framework of the celibate life. (By "intimacy" is meant the sharing and closeness that may include physical expression but need not, just as there can be physical expression without intimacy of any kind.) Celibacy gets a poor hearing in a world of self-fulfillment and immediate gratification. Some would question the healthiness of choosing such a life. Although celibacy is possible, it is not without its hazards.

Keith Clark, in *Being Sexual . . . and Celibate*, makes some good distinctions and clarifications. Biological sexuality is described as being male or female—the form in which one exists in this world, the identity through which one relates to the world. One's urges and needs may be considered part of that biological sexuality. The biopsychological aspect of sexuality involves the combinations of biological urges and the patterning of our sexual behaviors that result from development, learning, experience, and cultural conditioning. The personal, spiritual dimension of our sexuality makes it distinctively human. It includes our need for connectedness.

The study of human attraction reveals the process of how we get close. When one encounters another person, the phenomenon of attraction may provoke fascination, a desire to know more. Falling in love or, more accurately, the process of infatuation, is the next step for most of the world. Infatuation fans one's desire to be with that person as much as possible and know him or her as well as possible. This can lead to the initiation of romantic behaviors that are designed to stimulate one's emotions for that person while consciously or unconsciously evoking similar responses in him or her. It can (and often does) lead to physical expression but does not necessarily lead to intimacy. Intimacy is always personal, for it involves an openness and communication between people, a gradual self-disclosure.

Clark cites several levels of self-disclosure: fact, opinion, feelings, attitudes, and faith. As trust develops, we are able to reveal more personal aspects of ourselves. Isn't it strange that when we enter religious life we are often asked to share our faith before we have shared the facts of who we are or what we think on various issues?

Robert McAllister, M.D., in *Living The Vows: The Emotional Conflicts of Celibate Religious*, cautions about the dangers of forced intimacy and premature self-disclosure. People need time to experience trust and sense the trustworthiness of the group before they can open up. Premature self-disclosure can invite an invasion of privacy. For some, it can threaten ego boundaries and sense of self, and this can be pyschologically destructive. Time is also necessary for sharing with others in the ordinary, day-to-day communal efforts that are the building blocks of trust and the foundations of possible friendships.

LONELINESS VERSUS SOLITUDE

Many people today see loneliness as the enemy of our lives. We deny it, avoid it, and escape it by many devices. Nonetheless, it is part of being human. We are incomplete and need others. Loneliness can serve as a signal for us to seek out connectedness. Our denial of it can lead to disguised behaviors through which we fulfill our needs inappropriately. As religious, we know our incompleteness and seek our primary relationship with God. Apart from some hermits, most of us also need others. Our incompleteness, expressed in loneliness, can signal our need to reach out of ourselves to others. Loneliness should not, however, be confused with healthy solitude.

Psychoanalyst Anthony Storr, in a recent work entitled *Solitude: A Return to the Self*, challenges the current overemphasis on establishing relationships as the sine qua non for personal happiness. He takes issue with the object-relations theory of modern psychoanalysis that has placed a high premium on intimate relationships as the exclusive way to happiness.

Storr asserts that emotional maturity demands not only the capacity for human relationships but also the capacity to be alone. Building on psychiatrist D.W. Winnicott's theory of transitional objects, he outlines how one discovers oneself when alone, first in the safe presence of the mother, then with oneself in solitude. Psychoanalytic cure takes place in the safe presence of the analyst, where the individual, practically in solitude, explores who he or she is. Analogously, prayer is also seen as being alone in the presence of God.

Solitude becomes necessary for the integration of the self and fashions a context for true creativity and imagination. For much of the world, life's meaning is constituted less by personal relationships than by work. Storr examines the monastic tradition and makes a case for those who place a

Intimacy Involves Gradual Self-Disclosure

DEPTH OF REVELATION

Facts
Opinions
Feelings
Attitudes
Faith

WARNING: Premature self-disclosure can invite invasion of privacy and threaten one's sense of self.

DURATION OF TIME (DAYS, WEEKS OR MONTHS)

higher priority on intimacy with God than on intimacy in human relationships. He dismisses the judgment that such behavior is always neurotic or abnormal.

CONTROL IS POSSIBLE

Keith Clark cautions that there is an irrational side to our sexuality that can defy all our ascetic and intellectual attempts at mastery. We have urges that bewilder us at times. We attribute them to the seasons or the stars; we wonder what they mean.

Rather than nuisances or enemies that upset our serenity, our urges may simply be our bodies' way of telling us we are in need. Too often we think that need is biological, when in fact it may be a call to intimacy with others. Clark challenges some of the assumptions about sexuality that take shape in the form of myths: that one's impulses are strong, unpredictable, and unfriendly; that one's control system is not as strong as the impulses; and that sexual behaviors flow from impulses and urges that in turn shape one's life despite attempts to control them.

We often overlook one fact—namely, that we do have a choice. We do have some control over our actions. We may not have control over what we feel, but if we are healthy people, we do have control over what we do. If we deny or repress our

sexuality we make ourselves vulnerable; thus when confronted by our impulses, we may carry out and then rationalize our behavior according to one of these myths. Our giving in and rationalizing can lead to the abandonment of life commitments. When we become determined by impulse and urge, not choice or commitment, our humanity is diminished.

Rather than determinants of our life choices, our impulses may be signals that we have not attended to our need for intimacy. Whether celibate or married, those who continue to deny this need become vulnerable to being overwhelmed by their urges and abandoning their commitments. Clark refers to the "exit tale"—the story one tells oneself in order to believe that the new life is the only way of being true to oneself.

CELIBACY WITH INTIMACY

As religious, our commitment to celibacy—our choice—involves the subsequent choice of behaviors that allow us to be close to others yet are compatible with our commitment. Romantic and genital behaviors do not fall into this category. Romantic behavior, leading to genital expression, says "I will be there for you alone, always." Such relationships seek exclusivity and lifetime commitment. As celibates, we cannot make such promises. There are people who engage in those behaviors

without the intention of commitment or even intimacy, yet somehow the behaviors, while expressing a form of sexuality, do not constitute distinctively human sexuality—and certainly not the Christian understanding of sexuality.

We can, as religious, hope for the intimacy that develops among close friends, whether inside or outside the community, whether religious or lay. To a lesser degree we have the comradeship and support of our community, whose members may not be our best friends but, through faith, are our religious companions in the Lord. We also have the support and affection of those for whom and with whom we labor in the apostolate.

DANGEROUS SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

The danger of denying our need for intimacy has already been mentioned. We have heard some of the "exit tales" of others. There are yet other dangers when we do not control our sexual behaviors as religious. Wilkie Au, in "Particular Friendships Revisited" (Human Development, Spring 1986), resurrects the concept of the particular friendship—a form of infatuation that leads to the idealization of another as the answer to one's life and the embodiment of all that one seeks. A projection of the ego ideal is involved, whereby all that one would like to be is perceived in the personality of the other. The relationship becomes so exclusive that no one else is needed or wanted. Community life suffers as the friends distance themselves from their community. In most cases the bubble bursts. The infatuation ends; the real person emerges from behind the projected image of perfection. The result is disillusionment, hurt, disappointment, and an acrimonious breakup that usually eliminates any possibility of friendship. At times such relationships may be sexual. This may lead to secrecy and guilt, whether experienced or repressed and expressed in hostile behaviors.

Another danger is the so-called third way, where individuals stay in their religious community but carry on romantic relationships outside of it. These relationships separate the individual from the community in which he or she lives and can lead to tension therein.

Finally, a more pathological danger is the seeking of promiscuous relationships with little or no commitment. This opens up the whole topic of sexual addiction, which will not be covered here.

HEALTHY EGO REQUIRED

Given a primary love relationship with God, friendship and religious companionship can cultivate and nurture mature, healthy, and productive individuals. Some may take issue with this and point to the walking wounded in religious life. Time and time again, I see that religious life does not make them so. Often it is a case of an individual's limited capacity to establish relationships. A healthy vowed life presumes a reasonably healthy ego and the emotional strength to weather hard times. It requires warmth, yet an independence that permits relationships that are balanced and not dominated by need and overdependency.

In *The Anatomy of Loving*, Martin Bergman points out some impediments to authentic love. There are those who find love difficult because they are narcissistic—that is, self-sufficient and self-satisfied to the extent that they have no need for others except for further adulation and praise to bolster their self-esteem.

Then there are people who so dislike themselves that they are afraid to reveal themselves. They fear rejection, so they reject first. An adequate level of self-esteem and a sense of personal worth are essential to everyone's well-being. To see the good in others is difficult if one cannot see any in oneself. There are also those who are caught up in unconsciously motivated relationships that reflect repetitious patterns of old relationships, which in many cases were defeating. The woman or man who ends a troubled marriage only to remarry someone very similar to the first spouse is a common example.

Last, there are the severely disturbed. Fortunately, we do not see many of these people in our communities. They are incapable of sustaining a relationship, as it arouses fears of fusion and loss of self that would mean the annihilation of one of the individuals.

In brief, the healthy can freely give and take and can be open to give and receive love. The neurotic bring the conflicts of the past into their relationships. The seriously disturbed fear fusion and loss of self.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS NECESSARY

We can now return to the possibilities of community. What can and cannot be expected? Robert McAllister identifies realistic expectations that can promote good health and avoid crushing disappointment. He points out that the founders of many communities were united by bonds of affection that led them to work together toward shared goals. They were friends who knew one another deeply and intimately. As the communities grew and developed, however, those affectionate bonds did not survive as essential characteristics of the followers.

McAllister says, "Religious communities come together to respond to the temporal and spiritual needs of their members and to join in common efforts for the benefit of the church and the welfare of society." He focuses on what one can and cannot expect from community: "Religious communities . . . do not include promises of emotional love or mutual affection in their bonds of formation. To offer aspirants such promises represents either de-

ceit or poor judgment." In fact, such promises make for confusion and disappointment later on when the expectations are not met.

The family model, McAllister implies, is not a good one for religious, for "if . . . a religious community attempts to make psychological love and emotional closeness its goal, everyone is exposed to the traffic of personal affection, exclusive relationships, private dislikes, jealousy, erotic attachments, rejection, and all the contradictions of shallow emotional love." In his article in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (Fall 1988) concerning the admission of candidates to religious life, David O'Connor comments, "Although it is hoped that in their community life the members will, indeed, find a fraternal or sisterly support group among their religious brothers or sisters, no religious community can promise anyone who joins it that his or her need for intimacy will be met. Intimacy is a gift that people give to one another; it cannot be forced or demanded."

There is hope, for religious life can offer much that should not be treated lightly. We can expect many things, such as support, shared goals, companionship, and friendship. We can live healthy and human lives. There are many challenges and no promises of an easy way to achieve our goals. Relationships take hard work both to start and to sustain. If we have reasonable expectations, we can find satisfaction in our lives. If we lapse into unreal hopes, we can expect stress and conflict, which can lead to an exit tale and an alternate choice of life commitment.

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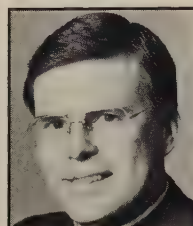
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Facial Expressions Create Moods

For years, San Francisco cardiologist Meyer Friedman, M.D., has been teaching his type A patients to smile deliberately and often in order to decrease their anger and hostility—the emotions commonly related to coronary heart disease—and to thereby substitute peace and joy. He has been following the teachings of Charles Darwin and William James, who in the 1880s wrote treatises asserting that facial expressions can prompt the feelings that accompany them.

Psychiatrists, contrary to Darwin's and James's belief, have generally held that feelings follow from thoughts or mental images, such as neuroses or anticipations, and that facial expressions are the visible signs and effects of feelings. But Daniel Goleman of the New York Times reports that in recent studies performed at the University of Michigan and Clark University, "simply having people put their facial muscles in a configuration typical of a given emotion produced that feeling." Psychologist Robert Zajonc, Ph.D., a leading proponent of the theory, explains: "I'm not saying that all moods are due to changes in the muscles of the face, only that facial action leads to changes in mood."

Dr. Zajonc theorizes that "as certain facial muscles relax and tighten, they raise or lower the temperature of blood flowing to the brain. These changes in temperature, in turn, affect the brain centers that regulate emotion." Fear, anger, disgust, and sadness, his research showed, can be produced by such muscular change.

In the journal Science, Dr. Paul Ekman and his associates at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco published their finding that "when people mimic different emotional expressions, their bodies produce distinctive physiological patterns, such as changes in heart and breath rate for each emotion."

In summary, Goleman reports, "In lieu of any other strong feeling, the theory holds, a given expression can induce the mood it portrays."

A Theory of
Small-Group Development

Research on therapeutic process produces
findings potentially applicable
to religious communities.

P. Wells Shambaugh, M.D.

Small groups are stable social institutions that lie midway between individuals and organizations. Look anywhere in society and you will find them—in religious life, in business, in politics, in education, in psychotherapy. Following a consistent pattern, some groups evolve from a collection of individuals into an integrated whole. Others make limited progress or none at all. What is the pattern? Why does it exist? Why do some groups develop whereas others do not? How can leaders strive for good results? Why are there so many groups, and why is development so satisfying? Many theories have been advanced, but none is fully satisfactory. In this article I will summarize a powerful but relatively neglected approach, the symbolic theory.

PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

Over one hundred empirical studies and three major reviews have yielded an archetype of group development. Unstructured groups begin chaotically. Those composed of nonvoluntary members become fearful, resistant, and rebelliously hostile in a phase of negative orientation. In contrast, voluntarily formed groups orient themselves positively, turn to the leader for guidance, become disappointed, and revolt. As they resolve their hostile conflicts, groups become enchanted with themselves and elaborate an indigenous system of norms and roles. Disenchantment, hostility, and fragmentation supervene en route to the stage of

production, which is marked by deeply empathic communication, positive affect, functional role-relatedness, and attempts to complete the group's task. As termination of the group approaches, the members deal with the loss and integrate the experience. If the sequence begins with positive orientation, three successful phases of harmony, cohesion, and productive work alternate with unsuccessful stages of hostility, threatened disintegration, and poor performance.

Development does not always follow the classic pattern. Enchantment and disenchantment are often absent, termination may be relatively absent, and pairing may occur in every stage. Occasionally, negative orientation is followed by a stage of dissatisfaction. Problems with leadership, membership, the parent social environment, and the duration of the group may distort or truncate the sequence.

MYTHS AND ROLE IMAGES

The most common explanatory theories are social psychological or psychological. The former deal with the evolving social structure and task activity, the latter with the members' group-formative regression and reconstitution. Less well known are the symbolic theories. They assume that shared unconscious fantasies model the phases of development.

The fantasies originate in childhood. The presen-

tation of a group of strangers in an unstructured situation profoundly threatens the members' sense of identity and activates primitive layers of their personalities. At first the fantasies stem from the early mother-child relationship and, to a lesser degree, from the play groups of toddlerhood. Later they grow out of nursery-school groups, and still later from latency groups such as the Scouts. Externalized and acted out, the fantasies converge into shared images that activate the understandings, practices, norms, and roles that constitute the group's culture. Throughout each phase, the group tests the overarching images against reality. If these images are disconfirmed, the group replaces them with others and moves on to the next phase.

Two types of images model each stage: myths (large controlling images of the group and its leader) and sets of role images tied together by lines of communication. Myths make sense of experience and, by calling forth distinctive moods and motivations, shape behavior. They prescribe norms, roles, and approaches to the group's task, include a statement of cause and effect, and elicit specific psychological conflicts. Only those myths that justify the stage of production have progress built in; the others are static and timeless. They are symbolic quasi-realities that resemble other worlds of fantasy, such as individual dreams, organizational visions, and societal myths.

The members of a group project powerful role images onto each other and the leader. If the projections resonate with their personal role images, the recipients may act them out. Members may be drafted into performing roles for the group and thereby made to feel either strangely omnipotent or powerless. For example, in one group's stage of negative orientation, a journalist member expressed what she thought were everyone's feelings of fear and inadequacy. Later she discovered that her projections had resonated with a deeply unconscious masochistic role image.

Ideally, leaders stand on the psychological boundary of the group, in touch with the emotional forces yet able to stand aside to monitor and guide them. The members' projections continually activate their personal and professional value systems, personal integration of the leader role, and idiosyncratic role images. Although the group's development is limited by the leader's neuroses, its successful progress depends on a dynamic blend of the leader's and members' emotional responses. Every stage presents special temptations and challenges.

A SEQUENCE OF PHASES

Initial Chaos. The modeling images are a weak, indifferent, ineffectual leader and a confused, anxious, aggressive, out-of-control group. Members may attend group gatherings sporadically, intellectualize endlessly, or discuss violence and sadism.

Leaders may prolong the chaos with laissez-faire neutrality or inappropriate democracy. They may have to institute controls to cure anxiety, stop destructive behavior, and preserve the group's existence.

Negative Orientation. The fantasies are hostile, even macabre. Members see the leader as strong, vicious, and manipulative or, paradoxically, as inadequate and noncontributory. Some groups push the leader to speak authoritatively, then attack whatever he or she offers. Others perceive the leader as a devious, withholding, and punitively authoritarian figure who is victimizing them in a complicated, malevolent experiment. A group of juvenile delinquents may imagine that their leader might maim or kill them. The members of another group may picture their group as icy, rejecting, and "dog-eat-dog" and may contemptuously deride one another for exploring feelings. Sometimes a group's attention is riveted on a desperately intense, highly ambivalent pair of members. Leaders may impede progress by rationalizing the pair's behavior, reacting with cold withdrawal, or becoming hostile and dominant. The leader should instead be benevolently authoritarian and respond to attacks with evocative curiosity.

Positive Orientation. Voluntarily formed groups often imagine that the leader is a sort of god and cluster around him or her like dependent toddlers, waiting for all their needs to be fulfilled. Pairs are homologous to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Leaders may block progress by making interpretations that are warm and accepting but condescending and hopeless. Instead, they should be dependable, confident, competent, and task-oriented.

Less regressive is the image of a paternalistic group whose leader tells the members exactly what to do. Endeavoring to actualize the fantasy, they ask for direction and test to discover what behaviors are acceptable. The leader may halt progress by providing active direction, or a nurturant, authoritative style, or controlling, oracular interpretations, or collusive authoritarianism masquerading as participatory democracy. He or she should instead define the group's general purposes, initiate and support facilitative norms, and maintain an open peer-leadership structure.

Dissatisfaction. Inevitably, the leader fails to satisfy the members' extravagant demands, triggering primitive rage and fears of abandonment and group dissolution. Some members' positive images become negative, and they attack. Others retain their idealizations and denigrate the attackers. The group may split into warring subgroups that advocate opposing fantasies. The negative usually prevails, and the group revolts. Pairing is another mode of rebellion. Leaders may act out the mem-

ers' projections by defending the old order or by capitulating. They should instead set an example of responsible leadership by bringing both subgroups back to the common task.

Enchantment. Groups contemplating a revolt often imagine that a hero will arise from the membership, overthrow the old order, and inaugurate a close, loving, utopian group. The leader is seen as a benevolent despot who guides and protects the group. The members are skilled at playing conciliatory, manipulative, and integrative roles. Strong social controls press for uniformity, consensus, and equal treatment for all. All decisions are unanimous, but the issues have no consequence. Pairs may have erotic overtones or function as mirrors of immature grandiosity. Leaders may block progress by accepting the members' idealizations and encouraging adoration and submission or by inflicting sexual abuse. Instead, they should encourage self-revelation, help the members perform their roles, and support the emerging structure.

Disenchantment. With a sense of failure, the utopian images of enchantment give way to the dystopian images of disenchantment. Once again, the group splits into warring subgroups. One faction supports the utopia and advocates unconditional love. The other pictures the group as a rigid, suffocating, authoritarian structure that demands excessive closeness, immaturity, and sacrifice of individuality. The members in this faction may disparage the group, attend group gatherings irregularly, resist further involvement, or even ask the leader to leave. Hostile individual confrontation, vacillating role acceptance, and critical introspection move the members toward increasing autonomy. Pairing, with its elements of sexual attraction and competition, is another assertion of individuality. Leaders are pressured either to defend the utopia by tightening controls or to overthrow the structure altogether. What they should do is maintain cohesion equilibrium and task commitment.

Production. In this phase, the leader and the members actualize the democratic, humanistic image they have constructed together. Members view the leader more realistically—as a resource and emergency person and an equal partner. They deal with each other as individuals with unique strengths and weaknesses while respecting their own dignity and integrity. Combining and recombining, they tackle their task in a cooperative, experimental, creative fashion. Roles are fluid, and communication is open, honest, and frank. Pairing is based on realistic appraisals and normal emotional ties.

Termination. Two sorts of fantasies characterize the termination stage. One is mourning the role image and the fading vision of the stage of produc-

The members of a group project powerful role images onto each other and the leader

tion. After a period of denial, the members begin to confront the loss, review their experience together, and extrapolate its meaning to outside relationships. They rearrange themselves again and again so that pairs can deal with unfinished business. When the end comes, they are left with the memory of a context in which feelings, thoughts, and behaviors were faced with increasing honesty. Later, some may model themselves after group patterns and create groups in which they can enact the leader's role.

The counterpoint is an ancient theme that denies the finality and insists that the end is but a new beginning. Its essentials are the abolition of the experience, the restoration of the initial chaos, and the reactualization of the generative fantasies of the orientations. Sometimes members try to expel the worthless thoughts and judgments by asserting that the whole experience was one long process of brainwashing and poisoning and by reviewing and repeating past episodes of scapegoating. Some members express fantasies that the last session will be an orgy. Acts such as stealing, drinking, and even overt psychosis may occur. Members may physically cluster together and be elated or even manically euphoric. Pairing fantasies are bacchanalian; in the case of one group, they included group marriage, incest, pedophilia, homosexuality, and polygamy. One man dreamed of turning into a woman and being enjoyably raped by a gigantic and powerful man. Some groups imagine that they and the leader have created an immortal, uniquely valuable progeny; women members may stake out the special role of carrier. Members may imagine scattering pieces of the group "corpse" on the ground and engendering little groups all over the

> # Leaders must truly care for the members and offer them empathy, genuine concern, friendship, and love

land. Some relive, reenact, review, and evaluate the events of the group's beginning. They may fantasize about a reunion.

Leaders should eschew denial and encourage open discussion. By sharing their own feelings about the group's termination, they should demonstrate how to look back on collective accomplishments while relinquishing attachment to those experiences.

THE LEADER'S DREAMS

The leader's fantasies also shape group development. Groups begin with dreams—the leader's visions for the whole group and for the individual members. The dreams are numberless. The theories on leaders and their visions are various, ranging from McGregor's theories X and Y of management to Lieberman, Yalom, and Miles's sixfold typology of encounter-group leaders. Yet the structure of the mind and the nature of childhood ensure that all the visions are homologous to the developmental images. The result is that the leader's aspirations shape the developmental archetype and determine its endpoint. For example, the late Carl Rogers's pursuit of a trusting, cohesive encounter group and spontaneous, intimate members toned down the stage of dissatisfaction in that group and arrested its development at the stage of enchantment.

Visions are fashioned by the leader's professional ideology and personal needs. Autocratic ideologies leave little room for individuality, whereas democratic ideologies are more tolerant. To illustrate:

the Tavistock method of training in group dynamics requires an ascetic, task-oriented group and a leader with a powerful, distant role image that approximates the role images of negative orientation and dissatisfaction. In contrast, the training approach of the National Training Laboratory accommodates leaders who enact all the role images, not simply those operative in the stage of production. Narcissistic leaders are uncommitted to professional ideologies and value systems in general. Their need for adoration draws them to the role images of the orientations and enchantments.

Leaders must actualize their dreams. One of the best methods is paying attention. Every announcement, agenda, and seating arrangement, every member addressed and every member not addressed, everything said and everything not said is an opportunity to show what matters. Constancy is critical. What is important is the quantity of attention, not the quality. Teaching, coaching, and role modeling are effective. For example, many group therapists instruct prospective members that eventually they will have to reveal all their secrets; they encourage peer interaction by turning aside and refusing to answer questions. Leaders' reactions to crises and critical episodes, selection of new members, and handling of terminations are illustrative. Less explicit are choice of meeting place and policies about fees and absences. Leaders cannot avoid communication; they can only orchestrate it.

To attain one of the successful, harmonious phases, leaders must lead by inspiration. They must provide dreams that are clear and compelling yet realistic and attainable, visions of which the entire group can be proud. They must explain, interpret, and attach meaning to individual and group experiences and provide an approach to the task at hand. They must truly care for the members and offer them empathy, genuine concern, friendship, and love. To attain the stage of production, more is required. Leaders must offer visions that stress innovation, high quality, the growth of every member, and contribution to the community. They must believe that everyone can contribute if given the chance and treat all members with dignity. They must be unassertive, socially sensitive, and supportive, foster a sense of we-ness, and encourage the members to increase their interactions and get to know one another. They must steer the group as a whole yet allow it to find its own answers. They must systematically build a culture with norms of active involvement, acceptance, mutual support, appropriate disclosure, and shared responsibility for group functioning.

LEVELS OF FUNCTIONING

More than thirty-five years ago, Siegmund Foulkes showed how democratic dreams interact with group members' fantasies. A group-analytic

group, he wrote, functions on two levels: the manifest and the latent. On the manifest level the leader stays in the background. Promoting independence, appreciation of individual differences, frankness, and reason, he treats the group members as adults on his own level and addresses them as though they are an integrated whole. When the leader functions on the latent level, the members fantasize that he or she is omnipotent and omniscient and expect magical help. The leader passively accepts this role and does not deny or exploit it for his own needs. To play God would fix the group at an intermediate stage of development. Instead, the leader lets the group bring him or her down in stages, from leader *of* the group to *a* leader *in* the group. On the manifest level there is a crescendo in the maturity of the group; on the latent level there is a decrescendo in the authority of the leader. The experience is a means of democratic education, and the leader's qualifications are those of a desirable leader in a democratic community.

The symbolic theory is very powerful. Practically, it offers observers a map of the social terrain and leaders a way to proceed regardless of the task at hand. Theoretically, it links small-group psychology to the other human sciences. Homologues of the developmental fantasies exist on all levels—individual, organizational, societal, and spiritual—growing more profound as one ascends the hierarchy. For example, the image of the ideal latency group leads to the fantasy of the production group, utopian theories of management such as McGregor's, the diffuse utopia of modern Western democracy, and, in its most sublime form, the image of the world to come. Similarly, the fantasies of the dependency and enchantment groups can be traced to images of the Garden of Eden and the messianic age. Therein lies the most profound attraction of the small group. According to Tavistock leader Margaret Rioch, the deepest reason why leaders

and members engage in the work is mystical and spiritual: the fleeting experience of merging in the production group. We might say that it is the yearning for paradise, a craving found in every time and place. To be a part of a developing group is to experience in the present a little of the paradises of the past, and at the same time a tiny hint of the heaven to come.

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Cicero to Atticus: Hi!

James Torrens, S.J.

So who was sitting at the table there
in the place now empty
someone inquires, coming with a full plate,
and we can't remember.

We recall an argument beyond repartee
and of the revolving presences
wasn't the one we are reaching for
heatedly at the center?

It comes back. Someone, to tweak the master,
put Cicero on the scales against Virgil,
claiming the moralist to weigh more
than the unspeakable sorrow of Troy.

How he bridled at such inanity,
the owner of that surprising bass.
How the old master's cheeks glowed
and his eyes, touching on a loved author.

Well, he was our lesson *de amicitia*
who dropped any paperwork in hand
at a knock when we came nosing to Paris,
and he never threw away a letter.

Not unfamiliar with the woes,
he flamed wickedly at our critics
and crowed at our small victories.
He could fuss and sniff. So?

How his approving eyes store up
seat by seat at a family dinner.
At the sacred table he led quietly,
intently, and that's where we'll find him.

Santiago, Chile: Winter 1989

It is refreshing, along the crowded sidewalks of the Avenida O'Higgins, to see young girls, three or four abreast, with their arms about each others' waists, and slightly older boys shoulder to shoulder. There are kissing couples enough in the Metro and along the quieter streets; the fast friendships of the very young hold my attention for now. Our latter days seem to throw us back to our earliest. As one gets older, friendship gets very precious again.

Perhaps it is the loss of someone close, or the breaking of a circle, that makes us more aware of the value of friendship at a certain age. I could be merely generalizing from my own experience, having spared less time for friends at busier or more anxious times. Anyway, for the purpose of later-life illumination, a scene comes back to me now from my youth. My mother and brother and I, with cousins and aunts, used to spend summers in a rambling Italian-style country place with an orchard and a vegetable garden and beds of marigold and zinnia. The men were at work in The City. Every evening that I can remember, our caretaker, Giulio, retired to his porch behind his screen door with his friend Mattaioli. They talked some, very low, but mostly they smoked their pipes. Giulio's wife Eda and his son Ernie, our playmate, occupied themselves somehow behind the scenes. That's how it was for years.

Few of us experience friendship as a silent, long smoking of pipes. It is probably most often a phone call: "You are not going to believe this." "Hi, are you feeling any better?" "I've got to get something out of my system." "Listen, maybe you can help me figure this out." "Hey, guess what—I got the job." "What a bummer, they picked someone else." "You heard what so and so is preaching these days. I want to get your opinion of it." "Hello, just touching base." "Are you free for lunch?"

Friends truly give life its salt. They tend, more often than not, to be of the same sex because of natural affinities. Ease seems to be a special mark of friendship. Across the gender line there is a charge in the air that sometimes complicates the easiness, although it often enhances it. Over time,

and as people grow, *la différence* fades. A good heart, a wise head, a shared depth across any difference of gender, age, or culture truly draw people to one another. The great friendships of the world go in all directions: Huck Finn and Jim, Harold and Maude, St. Benedict and his sister, Thomas More and the prickly Erasmus, Catherine of Siena and her disciple Fra Tommaso, Sor Juana de la Cruz and the wife of the viceroy of Mexico, Edith Wharton and Henry James.

The vocation of married couples, it would seem, is to become the fastest of friends and, indeed, the most relaxed of friends. "Elementary," as Holmes would say to Watson—but certainly not automatic. So much tempering and mellowing and sharing of faith needs to happen; exhaustion, anxiety, personality weakness can so readily block it. Do many of the marriages that fail today go sour because couples fail to achieve friendship, a much more explicit goal than it once was? Maybe the church will get around to canonizing couples. We might begin with Jacques and Raissa Maritain. Christian social action in the mid-century, not just in Europe but worldwide, took its encouragement and impetus from Jacques; he in turn drew a large measure of conviction and inspiration from his wife.

CICERO PROVIDES EXAMPLE

When it comes to friendship, my mind swings back instinctively to something encountered in my earliest days of Latin studies, the formula opening of some letters: *Cicero Attico sal.* Although it means "salt," *sal* is used here as a short form of *salus*, or health. In fact, the complete formula is *salutem plurimam dicit*: "Cicero to Atticus wishes him the best of health." There was a flow of such letters—small talk, news, some unburdening—letters being, after all, a prime channel of friendship. And to Atticus, Cicero dedicated his treatise *De Amicitia* (*On Friendship*) for generations of young scholars to labor through and maybe, years later, to appreciate for its relevance to their lives. In his essay Cicero imagines that the upstanding Roman Laelius is reminiscing about his close friend Scipio Africanus the Younger. Laelius tells what he has learned about friendship from Scipio.

> I judge myself to have lived happily because it was side by side with Scipio. . . . We reached the fullest accord in our decisions, our interests, our opinions, which is the real strength of friendship. . . . What is more pleasing than to have someone to whom you can express things as openly as to yourself? What savor would success have, if there were not someone to be as happy about it as yourself? Wouldn't it be harder to bear the blows without someone who feels them more keenly than you do?"
>
> (*On Friendship*, sections 4 and 6)

Cicero's moralizing tended somewhat to the abstract, but in the above essay it drew its life, its savor, from the bond between Laelius and Scipio. I started this essay and the accompanying poem in an abstract vein, provoked by a question someone asked me about a well-known priest in our community who had just died: "Do you miss him?" I had to be honest with myself that I didn't quite, and as I was exploring the sort of rotating communities we have, where a gap is opened up and someone moves in to fill it, another Jesuit died whom quite a few of us really do miss because he concentrated on friendship. He was Maurice Belval, S.J., long-time student in Paris and visitor to Paris, as well as teacher of Latin and Gregorian music and French. The poem came out of its amorphous state when he entered it.

I now find myself in Chile, where those in contact with Communist party members report an unsettling impression. These are single-minded people. They are distinctive for their discipline, their austerity, their group and class commitment. They have very cool heads. (There was chaos in the Allende socialist regime of 1970 to 1973, but not of Communist making.) But this coolness has a chilling side. It can translate into a dismissiveness in individuals, into zero warmth on contact. Among such intense partisans, the New Testament message of the two commandments, the two directions of love, comes as something new when it is recognizably and compellingly embodied.

I note something of a parallel. Austerity, a watch over the heart, a commitment to the directives and missions of the order—that is how I learned the religious vows, which I am hardly about to repudiate. Did our skin tend often to harden? There are some indications it did. In any case, I find that the sense of companionship, or society, intimated in my way of life, even in the initials I add to my name, does not go without saying—has to be activated, become a spirit, a life-giving dimension. Each of us has to have at our center a heart. Elementary! Our own poor hearts, we find early, are quite insufficient. But befriended beyond the expectations of our poverty, followers of the one unfailing Friend, included surprisingly in the one comprehensive body, we can go forth befriending, inclusive, faithful—in sum, as true hearts.

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Negotiating Non-Negotiables in Religious Life

Religious life offers more possibility for change than most people suspect.

David L. Fleming, S.J., S.T.D.

All of us are familiar with the story from St. Mark's gospel about the blind man. Jesus takes him apart from the village and its people, uses his spittle to touch the area of the blind man's eyes, and then asks, "Do you see anything?" When the man says that he sees people but they look like trees walking, the reader might wonder, with all due respect, whether Jesus is losing his touch. But after Jesus touches him again, the blind man announces, "I can see clearly." At that point Jesus sends him home directly, telling him not to go back into the village.

THE GIFT OF FOCUS

The story is pregnant with meaning for us as members of the Vatican II church and as religious men and women. We often feel that we are not able to see—that we are blind. It may be one of our greatest pains in the ongoing renewal of religious life. For all our prayer, for all our desire to cooperate with God's grace, for all our efforts at renewal, for all the help at organization, recruitment, and fiscal responsibility we seek from experts and from modern science and technology, we seem to remain in the first stage of the blind man's healing process. In our own way, we seem to see people walking, but they look like trees—or are they walking trees that look like people? We don't seem to be able to focus. Our frequent moments of doubt might well earn us the chiding remark of Jesus: "O you of little faith." We may even have our doubts about Jesus himself: Is he losing his touch? Is he calling anyone to religious life anymore? Does he care about our way of living the Christian life? At times we wonder where we should place our hope. It is not that we have no hope; we're just not sure what we should be hoping for.

One of the seers of the twentieth century, the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, introduced his masterful study *The Phenomenon of Man* with the statement, "All life is tied up in the verb 'to see.'" Seeing—being able to see, to focus—is most important for the creative life and activity of humankind.

EXPANDING OUR EXPERIENCE

Perhaps nothing blocks the flow of creative juices as effectively as the statement, "There is nothing to be done; that is the way it is." It is a common human experience that if one has grown up with something—whether it be the kind of food one eats or the side of the road on which one drives or the kind of clothes one wears—one tends to think that that experience is "the way it is" or "the way it should be." For some of us, the phenomenon of religious life in the church is fixed in our personal experience of it.

Our experience is a wonderful gift, and if we ignore it we do so at our peril—yet at the same time our experience is always very limited. For vision, for creativity, we need to cooperate with God's grace and somehow move beyond the limitations of our personal experience of religious life. I would like to suggest one way in which we might expand our horizons: by coming to appreciate the creative people in the history of religious life in the church who, by God's grace, had a focus—who somehow, touched by Christ, saw in new ways. We know the story of the blind man well, but let us now try to see

it with a new focus. Perhaps our reflections on various parts of that story will stimulate us to view in a fresh way the very religious life we live today and will live tomorrow—God willing and God giving the grace.

ROLE PROVIDES IDENTITY

At the very beginning of the church community formation—so distinctly visible in their identity that St. Paul referred to them in his earliest letters—were people who felt called by God and saw that their identity and importance did not come from a relationship of marriage or from being a parent; that it was enough to focus their life and worth on a relationship with Jesus (and thus with God). Two groups, significant for their life choices, stand out in the early church: the order of virgins and the order of widows. They are known for both who they were and what they did in the life of the early church. No one asked these groups how they worked out what was essential to their lives; by the grace of God, it happened. What was necessary? A relationship of exclusive love with God (analogous to the relationship of marriage) and an ideal of devoting one's life activities to the service of the church. Of course, these people were "homebodies," living in the midst of the local church community.

About two hundred years later, in a comparatively peaceful time during which there was less need to stand up for one's faith, some people felt the call and the grace from God to focus their lives on Jesus in a more radical and costly way—with an exclusivity of relationship to God signified by a solitary life in the desert, away from the community. No sooner had these original hermits moved apart than the mountains and hillsides and deserts were dotted with their followers. Everyone had his or her own little cell. At the same time, a relationship of spiritual counsel and support among these solitary people became a necessity for their new way of living a dedicated Christian life. Though founded much later in time, the Carthusians still follow this model of religious life closely today.

Soon, with all the turmoil and unrest that came to civil society through the incursions of less civilized peoples from northern Europe, some people felt that creating an enclosure around their chosen way of life would better enable them to live in a special relationship with the Lord. This enclosure, called a monastery, would truly serve as a model of the "city of God" or a school for Christ's disciples. The monks' living together, praying together, and working together marked out and gave witness to this way of living the Christian life. A vow of stability—steadfastness in God and in this new communal relationship with God—was one ingredient of this life. But a contrasting vow of continual movement, or conversion, concerned one's striving to grow in virtue. Monasteries, like little villages, began to dot the mountains and hillsides of the known Christian world.

THREE VOWS EMERGE

With minor variations, this way of living a specially dedicated Christian life went on for some 800 years. Then some people, stimulated by a call from God, saw in the newly developing cities a need for a special kind of Christian witness and service. It demanded not a little monastery-village out in the countryside but a house in the city that could serve as a way station. These specially dedicated people did not invite others to come into a monastery enclosure for prayer or help; instead, they traveled from their monastery way stations to take the gospel message and service to the street corners and parish churches of the cities. The call to such a life came to be focused in three ways. First, with the rise of urban centers (brought about largely by the new merchant and business class), the need to witness and speak to the Christian value of poverty became so great that a vow of poverty took on greater importance. Second, chastity continued to bespeak the exclusive relationship with Jesus (and thus with God) that grounds one's personal identity and worth apart from marriage and parenting and looks to a world beyond. Third, the coordination and direction of all the new action for ministry in the cities and villages resulted in a more clearly defined vow of obedience to a human leadership authority. And so evangelical counsels, professed in three vows, took their necessary place in the context of religious life.

The story continued in much the same way for some three hundred years. As the evolution of both church and society progressed and as human knowledge began to explode, the call to follow Jesus in a special dedication was heard in a new way by many. Influenced by the discovery of new worlds in the East and West, the dedicated life focused more and more on mission, and the religious group's life and prayer together were shaped by this concentration on missionary activity. The group itself was in movement; the religious house (the older tradition of monastery or friary) had little or no importance in this new focus. The direction and coordination of the members' activities elevated obedience and availability to the status of requisites of religious life.

We should make a special note on this period of development. Hitherto, little distinction had been made between women and men who served as hermits, anchorites, monks, and mendicants. Persons of both sexes heard the call of Christ and founded apostolic orders in an effort to create a dedicated way of life as they felt the Spirit led them. But each time, the church—too tightly bound by the mores of society—could not imagine

giving equal freedom of movement to women. The lives and activities of the new apostolic orders of women were curtailed and shaped to the older model of an enclosed (and thus protected) religious life. Angela Merici and Mary Ward are two founders who were impeded by this myopic focus of the church.

SPECIAL MINISTRIES DEVELOP

Some three hundred years later there was a changed landscape of newly formed countries, new secular governments, and an often embattled church. The call to a dedicated life and service became focused on some very evident needs within society. One of the greatest explosions of religious life happened in the nineteenth century, when many congregations of religious women and men responded to a call from God within focused ministries. Notable among them were those in the ministry of education, with its special emphases on the type of student (underprivileged, talented, handicapped), the type of education (technical, liberal), the location of education (in schools or in homes), and the age of those being educated. Other ministries dealt with hospitals and health care or with social services for children without parents or homes, for men and women derelicts and prostitutes, for people of persecuted nationalities, and so on. In addition to living together, working together in focused ministries took on increased importance in religious life.

Within the following hundred years, some people heard a call to a kind of dedicated life in which—emboldened by the bonds of the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—they would imbue every kind of human activity with lived Christian values. Often distinguished neither by where they lived nor with whom they lived, groups of such people became identified as secular institutes. But the social groupings they created for support and formation also helped to focus their ministry.

FOCUS ON THE NECESSARY

This overview of religious life history shows us that people who had graced vision focused their hope by giving shape to new kinds of dedicated life within the church. Each religious group embodied Christ's presence anew in witness and in service. Of course, what was necessary for this dedicated life continued to be modified by each new vision. What every founding person had to do was focus again on what was absolutely necessary for this form of dedicated life. Over and over again in the history of religious life in the church, we have thus found ourselves negotiating non-negotiables, or what people thought was absolutely necessary.

For example, it would appear that the dedicated life, from the very beginning, demanded living "at home" in the midst of the community—either in the exclusive love relationship with Jesus (God) from the first moment of dedication or in such an exclusive relationship beginning upon the death of a spouse. When each new form of dedicated life appears, the questions start and the negotiations begin. The negotiations are with the expectations of the ordinary people who make up the church community, with tradition, with church authority, and often within the first group of founding members. Once, the question was, How could people go off to the wilderness by themselves—wasn't this special way of life meant to be in the community, in the ordinariness of neighborhood living? Soon the question became, Isn't it necessary to have solitude for a life of union with God? Then it became, Isn't it necessary to have a self-sufficient monastery-village in order to truly live this dedicated life? Aren't stability and *conversatio morum* (a turnabout in one's behavior patterns or life–style) necessary for religious life?
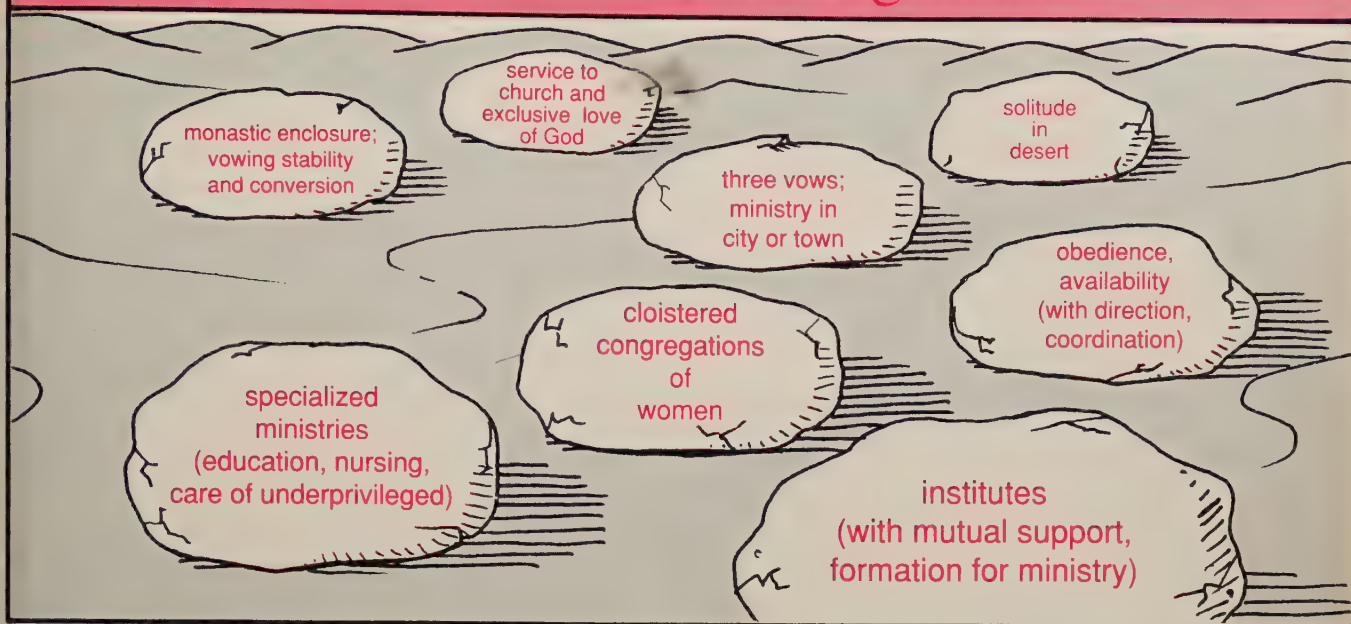
The next group of founding persons had to face additional questions: Isn't it necessary to have everyone living together in one place and so serving as a community? Shouldn't religious be self-supporting with their monastery farms? Is the begging of mendicants for their livelihood consistent with the life of service? Then more questions: Isn't it necessary that religious—dedicated persons—be situated in a permanent abode? Isn't it necessary that they take time together to pray the liturgy of the hours? Isn't it necessary that they have a capitular mass? Being church people, how do they witness their prayer for the church? And of course, specifically in regard to women: Isn't enclosure, the monastery, the nunnery, essential for the protection of dedicated women, just as a home is for any Christian woman or woman of virtue? What would people think if they saw these dedicated women running around in the streets trying to do gospel service? Still suffering from the long-term difficulties of the wandering mendicants (a vexing problem of the *fraticelli*), the church did not want to have any "galloping girls" (as the members of Mary Ward's group were known).

For both women and men, the vow of stability had certainly been mitigated in the mendicant groups, but at least their members returned to a common house after ministering. On the other hand, the church considered the apostolic groups to be getting out of hand; in the name of mission, they seemed to be letting go of everything necessary for religious life.

With the French Revolution as the centerpiece, the late 1700s and early 1800s brought about a fuller eclipse of the religious life-style than did any previous cause, including the Black Death of the fourteenth century and the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century. The resurgence of religious life was all the more dramatic in this context. The turbulence of the times gave rise to a new kind of

Some Historic Non-Negotiables

- monastic enclosure; vowing stability and conversion
- service to church and exclusive love of God
- solitude in desert
- three vows; ministry in city or town
- obedience, availability (with direction, coordination)
- cloistered congregations of women
- specialized ministries (education, nursing, care of underprivileged)
- institutes (with mutual support, formation for ministry)

dedicated life that was focused less on the stability of the vows and more on the community of support and mission. This version of the dedicated life arose in groups that came to be identified as societies of apostolic life. Is a dedicated life possible without the specification of evangelical counsels? Can there be a form of religious life in which certain vows or bonds are renewed every year (as done even now by the Daughters of Charity)? Aren't a lifetime commitment and the expression of vows necessary in religious life?

As the twentieth century began, some founders carried out a vision of a consecrated life lived totally immersed in the ordinary surroundings of our world. This may sound like the path followed by the earliest orders of virgins and widows, whose members participated in their ordinary civil and parochial communities. But these new groups of dedicated people had special rules of life and a certain mutuality of support and formation. It was only in 1947 that the church officially recognized that such groups, which came to be called secular institutes, embody a legitimate form of dedicated life in the Christian community. Again the question could be asked: Isn't some form of visible witness essential to a consecrated way of life? Shouldn't some identifiable work or ministry be a part of a group's identity?

VARIATIONS IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religious life has always had some necessary elements. But within the 2,000-year history of the Catholic church, we have always found it difficult to see clearly what are the absolute necessities in religious life. The church has most recently recognized this fact in both the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1983 and in the latest reorganization of the Vatican curial commissions.

The Vatican curial commission for religious life has recently been renamed in an effort to reflect better the reality expressed in canon law. Formerly called the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (CRIS), it is now known as the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life (we have no acronym yet; CICLSAL seems a little unwieldy). This name change reflects the official recognition of the various forms religious life has taken, and now takes, in the church.

The new Code of Canon Law was meant to put in legal form the directions and understandings of Vatican II. Because *religious life* is not a technical term and is truly ambiguous (as we sometimes hear, "Are not all Christians religious persons?"), the church focused on the term *consecrated life* in Vatican II. In recognizing hermits and the order of virgins as situated within consecrated life, the church has made it evident that religious life as we have commonly known it, as well as secular institutes, are simply other forms of consecrated life. Each form requires certain essentials for its own identity and spirit. Although consecrated life and religious life are not synonymous, there is still confusion in the use of the two terms, both in our everyday language and in official ecclesial documents.

To further confuse the issue, the church also recognizes another area of dedicated life. The di-

verse societies of apostolic life are found in every field of the church's apostolic activity. Some of these societies appear to be closely akin to consecrated life in that members take private vows. Others seem more like associations, or perhaps societies, that belong in new institutional and canonical categories. Consequently, the societies of apostolic life vary greatly in terms of what they consider absolutely necessary for their membership.

IDENTIFYING THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Where does our brief survey of the various forms of religious life lead us? Perhaps it can help us enter more fully into the experience of the man to whom people looked like trees walking. I hope it has made the point that the different forms of dedicated life throughout the church's history have all had various essentials—perhaps what the founding people might have called non-negotiables.

Non-negotiables rightly come out of vision and creativity. Non-negotiables are never life-giving or creative if they are presented only as remnants of the past, "things" of tradition. Neither are non-negotiables life-giving or creative if they are only chosen in reaction to past hurts or restrictions.

We all tend to have our non-negotiables. Some of them come from the values of our religious congregation, others from our own personal choices or prejudices about what is of value, especially as we imbibe the gospel. Wherever they come from and however we identify them, non-negotiables always need to be negotiated. Why?

1) Because what is truly non-negotiable for one way of religious life is less so, or not at all so, for another;
2) Because religious life—like God, like human beings, like the church—is ultimately an ill-defined mystery;
3) Because the bridges between the gospel and culture keep collapsing in every age and in every country (in every epoch, God calls people to witness in new ways to the radicality of the gospel, and so religious life continually takes on new forms to close the gap);
4) Because religious life, like all forms of beauty linked to God's life, has as many blazing facets of diamond beauty as we have the graced freedom to imagine;
5) Because ultimately, religious life can assume as many forms as the creative powers of human beings can produce, empowered by God's life of grace.

What distinguishes religious life, what makes it distinctive, is never anything that would draw it apart from living the Christian life. We pose the wrong question to ourselves when we ask what distinguishes religious life from lay Christian life.

For me, it is always only a matter of degree; this is why the language about religious life is full of comparatives (for example, "I feel called and I want to do something *more* in my following of Christ"). Religious life, in all its various forms of dedication, is somehow meant to bring out a new quality of life professed and aimed at by human cooperation with God's grace.

Paradoxically, it is when we try to identify our non-negotiables that we find ourselves freed up to negotiate creatively. Religious life, in all its forms, remains always a gift of God to the church and, through the church, to the world. The gift comes through the founding people and continues to be given through those who live the religious life today. This gift is not meant to be buried or cast aside. Like every gift of God, it is meant to be reverenced and worked with—for our own good, the good of the church, and the good of our world.

A PROJECT FOR TODAY

Today we need to think and work creatively. We need to love the gift of dedicated life—religious life in all its forms in the church—and to love the particular form of it that we live. Religious life development, as we have seen, does not go forward by destroying previous forms. Human beings destroy, but God does not. God lets die, and God transforms, but God does not destroy. God is always creative and life-giving, in good times and in bad. We want to act with God today.

We want to look at the United States and the Roman Catholic church as it is today and ask, Where is the gap between gospel and culture? What do human society and the church need now? How can we take the gospel to those segments of culture that most need it now?

What, then, become our non-negotiables for a dedicated way of life? What is absolutely necessary in order for us to live and work to bridge the gap? What is absolutely necessary in order for us to be where the gap is?

In taking our creative approach, we may become aware that we need to let go of some things we may have considered non-negotiables in a previous situation or time.

Our prayer for grace today: how many times, O Christ, must we ask you to touch our eyes so that we can see clearly?

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The Brain, Epilepsy, and Religion

Richard P. Vaughan, S.J., Ph.D.

As early as the last century, a connection between epilepsy and religiosity has been noted. The religious experiences of the epileptic, such as having visions, feeling chosen by God to accomplish a mission, or experiencing God's presence, were once attributed to the person's disability, social isolation, or need for the consolation religion could give. As medical science developed, researchers began to hypothesize that there was a neurologic basis for the religiosity seen among some epileptics. Within the last decade, one group of researchers has shown a connection between temporal lobe epilepsy and some kinds of religious experience, whereas another group using a different research design failed to find any such connection. Both groups, however, narrowly defined religious experience in fundamentalist terms. Moreover, they commented that a subset of temporal lobe epileptics may have religious experiences after a seizure, whereas others do not, depending on their backgrounds and past experiences with religion.

Religiosity among temporal lobe epileptics is of particular interest because it may indicate that a certain part of the human brain is involved in religious experiences, or that some individuals may have heightened spiritual powers because of their brain structure.

DISORDERED ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY

Epilepsy afflicts approximately one half of one percent of the population of the United States. It is not a disease, but an abnormal reaction of the brain that produces a seizure or an altered state of consciousness. It is the consequence of an abnormal fluctuation in the electrical activity of the brain. Patients with epilepsy have seizures and other symptoms because a particular part (or parts) of the brain is overly excited and prone to fire in a wild and uncontrolled manner, sometimes setting off the electrical explosion that produces seizures. Epilepsy, which has been described as a firestorm within the brain cells, can be confined to a limited area, in which case it is called focal—or it can spread to other areas of the brain, or even to the entire brain, in which case it is said to be generalized. Abnormal chemistry in the brain cells is the cause of the overactivity that results in a seizure or a state of altered consciousness.

TYPES OF EPILEPSY

Epilepsy can be classified as grand mal, petit mal, or psychomotor (associated with disease of the temporal lobe of the brain). A grand mal attack produces an immediate loss of consciousness, followed by violent spasms of the entire body that are interrupted by brief periods of relaxation, tongue-biting, and loss of urinary sphincter control. Petit mal attacks are very brief lapses or alterations of consciousness, often associated with blank facial expression, flickering of the eyelids, and twitching of the mouth. Petit mal is relatively common in childhood, less so in adolescence, and rare in adulthood. Psychomotor epilepsy is characterized by altered states of consciousness and a wide variety of behaviors of which the patient is unaware, such

Temporal lobe epilepsy influences cognition, emotions, and behavior by determining thought patterns, ways of feeling, and modes of acting

"bark," of the brain), and a number of other structures, as well as connecting nerve fibers. Data suggest that the limbic system, which is one of the most primitive parts of the human brain and perhaps the seat of the unconscious mind, is involved in the processing of religion. The limbic system catalogues memories and links them with feelings and emotions. In animals it is the center of smell, the sense on which many depend for survival.
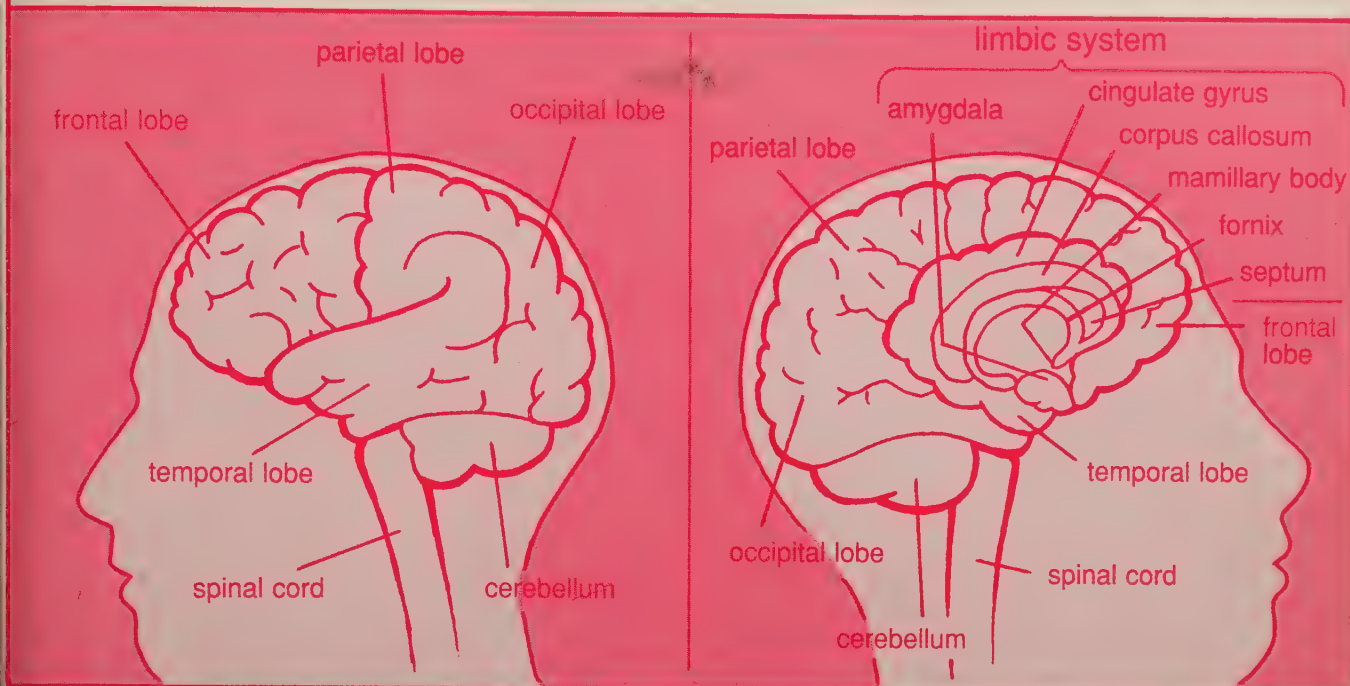
The brain is composed of a hundred billion cells. Within each structure there are millions of cells, linked together by their tentacle-like dendrites and axons. Each cell can be connected with as many as a thousand others. Chemically generated electricity passes through the millions of linked cells and activates them, thus bringing in information or sending out commands. Overactivity of the electrical current in the cells due to chemical imbalances causes abnormal thinking, feeling, and behavior, which in turn result in the various symptoms found in epileptics.

EPILEPTIC'S RELIGION AFFECTED

During the seizure or altered state of consciousness (the ictal period), it is thought that cells in the structures of the limbic system that contain religious memories are sharply stimulated and that this stimulation activates vivid memories related to past religious experiences. These memories are so strongly registered during this period that they persist afterwards. The period of persistence is described as interictal. Research shows that TLE is an abnormal state that lasts even after the ictal period. People with TLE have continuous limbic dysfunction characterized by abrupt fluctuations that range from electrical storms to abnormally low levels of metabolic activity. After the ictal period, people with TLE sometimes experience a religious conversion that is shallow and compulsive, during which they may be given to excessive moralizing. Their religiosity strikes the beholder as superficial rather than profound. Issues of right and wrong are central to them at all times. Life is deadly serious; they are devoid of a sense of humor. TLE people are hard on themselves and others; they often appear to be overly scrupulous, but consider this tendency to be a virtue rather than an affliction. They have difficulty distinguishing between significant and minor infractions. If they are Catholics, their practice of the faith centers around ritual, ceremony, and devotions. They may attend mass daily and sometimes twice a day, and try to recite three rosaries daily. Often, they measure virtue by quantity rather than quality. They may make a continuous round of novenas, either privately or at any parish churches where they can find them. If they are Protestants, they tend to be attracted to a fundamentalist church, attend as many services as the church

as automatic chewing, swallowing, or drooling, fragmented and sometimes incomprehensible speech, automatic gestures, and fumbling with one's clothes or undressing. Temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE) is a type of psychomotor epilepsy limited to the temporal lobes of the brain (both right and left); it is manifested in partial seizures and a variety of symptoms. TLE influences cognition, emotions, and behavior by determining thought patterns, ways of feeling, and modes of acting. TLE is common in adults, affecting about thirty to forty percent of all epileptics. This article deals with TLE and how it may relate to the religious experiences and practices of those afflicted with it.

STRUCTURE OF THE BRAIN

The brain is divided into two hemispheres. Although one side appears to be almost the same as the other, there are actually a number of differences. The temporal lobes—one on the right and one on the left—are located on the lower sides of the brain, behind the frontal lobes and in front of the occipital lobes. The cortex (outer surface) of the left temporal lobe differs from that of the right, and thus the two lobes are said to be asymmetrical.

The brain is made up of many different structures whose Latin names reflect their resemblances to certain objects. For example, the Latin word *amygdala* has been given to a structure in the temporal lobe because it looks like a walnut. Some of the brain's structures are organized into systems that function together and process particular kinds of data. In the medial aspect of the temporal lobe, the limbic system is composed of the amygdala, hippocampus, septal nuclei, corpus callosum, fornix, adjacent limbic cortex (outer surface, or

Anatomy of the Human Brain

[Left diagram labels:] parietal lobe · frontal lobe · occipital lobe · temporal lobe · spinal cord · cerebellum

[Right diagram labels:] limbic system · amygdala · cingulate gyrus · corpus callosum · mamillary body · fornix · septum · parietal lobe · frontal lobe · temporal lobe · occipital lobe · spinal cord · cerebellum

offers, and become obsessed with moral reform. They follow any position their church espouses to the letter.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS SHOWN

People with TLE tend to manifest the following personality characteristics: a congested flow of ideas, rigid thinking, and compulsive attention to detail, all of which have an impact on their religious beliefs and practices. In conversation they tend to proceed laboriously, overdevelop the topic, and get lost in details. They cling doggedly to any position they take, and no amount of reasoning will change their thinking. For example, a 26-year-old unemployed woman who was still living with her parents thought that she must assume the care and education of a 13-year-old girl because she was the girl's godmother and was thus obliged to see to her religious education, since the mother was not doing so. No amount of reasoning could sway this woman from her conviction. All she wanted to talk about was furnishing the girl's bedroom in the apartment she intended to lease, even though she had no way of paying the first and last months' rent and was far from ready to assume responsibility for a teenage girl. In discussing her plans for the girl's room, she talked at length about the ideal location for the windows and where the mirror should be situated. No matter what attempts were made to focus the counseling on a different subject, she inevitably returned to the one topic that was of concern to her—the girl's bedroom.

TLE people are obsessive in their thinking. They experience a continuous flow of thoughts and images, frequently pertaining to religion, over which they seem to have little control. For instance, repeated doubts about their faith, particularly while they attend mass, may cause them great angst because they are convinced that any distraction during the time of mass is sinful and that all doubts are equivalent to a denial of their faith. People with TLE tend to be irritable and paranoid. Anger plays a prominent role in their lives and is often directed toward family members who oppose their views. For the most part, TLE people are very conservative in their religious convictions and manifest hostility toward people who do not hold views similar to theirs. Their theology, if they have one, is usually traditional, dogmatic, and lacking in depth.

People with TLE are excessively rigorous in their interpretation of moral issues. They not only follow the letter of the law but also go beyond it. For example, they might interpret the Catholic church's stand on birth control to mean not only that a woman should abstain from using any means of birth control but also that she should want to have as many children as possible. TLE people often fail to live up to the moral code as they

perceive it and thus experience more feelings of guilt than most. Moreover, they expect others to adhere to the same moral code. People with TLE are known to break off friendships with those who fail to live up to their rigorous moral expectations.

RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS VALUABLE

Information about TLE is valuable not only because it can help counselors and spiritual directors in dealing with TLE but also because it may point to the parts of the brain that process religious experience. The data presented in this article have been derived from research on the behavior of people with TLE. The past ten years have seen tremendous strides in the study of the human brain, including the development of positron emission tomography, a technique that points out which parts of the brain are used when a person thinks a thought or learns something new, and displays the pathways in these parts of the brain on a computer screen. Positron emission tomography may eventually allow researchers to monitor the brains of people having religious experiences, such as contemplative prayer or an awareness of God's presence in their world or the oneness of all things in the universe, and then to compare the brain reactions of these people with those of people who seem incapable of similar experiences.

Do some individuals have greater innate spiritual capabilities than others? Or are there sex differences in the brain's processing of religious phenomena? Answers to such questions could be most valuable to pastoral counselors and spiritual directors in determining an individual's potential for religious experience and development.

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Warning Signs of Mental Illness

The American Psychiatric Association (APA), as part of its campaign to demystify and destigmatize mental illness, is attempting to help the public understand that mental illness is pervasive in this country and directly or indirectly touches the lives of virtually all Americans.

The APA has encouraged all psychiatrists to familiarize as many people as possible with the warning signs of mental illness so that early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can be accomplished. The following warning signs are listed in a recent issue of the APA's *Psychiatric News*.

1. Marked personality change
2. Inability to cope with problems and daily activities
3. Strange or grandiose ideas
4. Excessive anxieties
5. Prolonged depression and apathy
6. Marked changes in eating or sleeping patterns
7. Thinking or talking about suicide
8. Extreme highs or lows
9. Abuse of alcohol or drugs
10. Excessive anger, hostility, or violent behavior

Any one of these signs warrants psychiatric evaluation of the person manifesting it. In general, the earlier a diagnosis is made and treatment begun, the less damaging the illness will be to the patient and those in his or her family or community.

WHY NOT CATHOLIC PRIESTESSES?

Suzanne Zuercher, O.S.B., M.A.

Back and forth, from Rome to home, the dialogue on women's ordination continues with boring predictability. Women place their request—sometimes quietly and calmly, sometimes with vigorous assertion or even aggression—but always with persistence. There are women who want to be priests. There are also women who, not wanting it for themselves, still see priesthood as a right for those who desire it. And there are men who agree that priesthood for women is just. They ask, and ask again.

The other side of this conversation with the official church, the hierarchy, the institution—or however one names ecclesiastical authority—is a response as consistent as the request. That response is "No." The reasons given are always variations on the statement that women have another function in society. It is argued that the character and even the body of a woman prepare her for a different role. Whether it is a papal statement or one from the American bishops, the theme is the same: Being a priest is a man's job. Sometimes this theme is followed by an attempt to describe a woman's job, a futile attempt that tends to begin with vague rhetoric and end with silence after some remarks about physical and spiritual motherhood. Efforts to describe woman's contribution to society fail too. This is partly due to the fact that the views of various societies differ so radically regarding a woman's role as leader and/or parent.

The feminine in the abstract defies precise analysis. So does the feminine in the concrete. So, might I add, does the masculine, whether abstract or concrete. Beware, I have learned, of anyone who purports to know precisely what masculine and feminine mean. Those who follow a Jungian approach to the person use the word *archetype* to describe masculine and feminine. They speak about, show the effects of, and talk around these truths; carefully, they avoid definition. This is not the arena of analysis and precision. It is the realm of mystery, of life impressions, of accumulated emotional energy, and it is none the less real for being so. We might do well to accept that approach—to realize that description is more appropriate than definition when speaking about both feminine and masculine.

NEW PERSPECTIVE NEEDED

Having acknowledged the impossibility of clearly defining either archetype, where do we look to find the last word regarding the propriety of ordination in either sex? I would venture to say that we must make a creative shift in order to break out of the present repetitive pattern of request and refusal regarding ordination.

I would like to suggest that we take a look at a heretofore little-explored phenomenon in the history of many cultures. I say "take a look" designedly; I believe we need to know more about, to walk around, to uncover, to get the feel of the role of priestess and the place and function of priestesses in the societies that have them. I suggest we approach this issue contemplatively. If we do so, we may come to know our problem better and clarify it for ourselves and so speak with more authority to others about what we've come to understand. Following this reflection, we need to parallel the role of priestess with that of priest in the contemporary church.

Traditionally, the priestess was not a woman priest in her community. She was someone with her own work, her own style, her own way of being and relating to others that was feminine. She did not merely imitate the male religious; she was not

What would it mean if we were to admit that men and women, priests and priestesses, shared power and authority equally?

so totally androgynous that she retained no female distinctions. Rather, she was fully a woman who related to, and drew others toward, the divine.

I will not attempt to describe fully the common characteristics of priestesses, as these appear in various cultures over centuries. I do suggest, however, that focusing on those characteristics might be a fruitful way to unblock the currently obstructed flow of dialogue on ordination, a discussion so important for the church today and tomorrow. Many persons, myself included, find today's women (non–Roman Catholic) priests, with their Roman collars and albs, somehow conversation-stopping—much like remarks that halt dialogue because they seem bewilderingly inappropriate to the discussion. While I respect the women who have embraced priesthood and admire their selflessness and courage amid opposition, I still feel, when I see them, that their statement is not the fitting one. They symbolize for me the need to look at something else in this exchange—something beyond permission to participate in an already established role.

There are experts qualified to tell us what is universal in the role of priestess wherever it is found. While I am not one of these experts, I have spent much time studying the stories of women in the history of Western civilization, as have many others. Such stories have not been linked, to my knowledge, with the discussion of women's ordination. I propose it is time to place the traditional experience of the priestess beside the present unaddressed needs of God's people. Perhaps a woman expressing herself liturgically and sacramentally in a feminine way could make some contribution toward uniting us more intimately to a divine nurturer.

UNIQUE ROLE OF PRIESTESS

Words like *cleaning, caring,* and *tending* were often used to describe the liturgical actions of the priestess. She sometimes performed her offices in private without liturgical vestments and in nature rather than in a church or temple. In her liturgical presiding, images of water, vases, and animal milk often signified the fruitfulness to be had by receiving the divine into one's humanity. The waxing and waning of the moon and its consequent brightness and darkness were central in her liturgical seasons and years, as they were in her physical life. In many instances the priestess sacrificed bloody and unbloody offerings to the divine; because of this special task, she was a person set apart from those she represented.

She was a woman whose physical structure and rhythm indicated symbols and expression parallel to those of the priest but differently nuanced. Even when she did what a priest might do, she did so with actions, words, qualities that were her own. Yet despite her feminine characteristics and interpretations, it is important to note that she held a position of authority, power, and decision making equal to that of her male counterpart. Today's women priests, on the other hand, function no differently from male priests liturgically. Their feminine approach is not manifest in celebrations created by men. They have moved into a masculine role—hopeful, I am sure, that their very presence will contribute a feminine dimension. I am not sure that it will.

Perhaps these considerations may stimulate the courage of others to at least consider the idea of placing the role of priestess alongside that of priest. Priest, by definition, does not translate to woman; so says the official church, and that may be so. However, the primitive cultural traditions of Europe and Asia testify to the existence of another role, that of priestess, even as they also expand awareness to include a view of the divine as feminine.

Many questions arise and remain unanswered as we reflect. Would the ordination of women as religious leaders, as priestesses, need to be a radically different ceremony from that of men being ordained to the priesthood? If so, what liturgical expression of the priestess' function would appropriately characterize her reception of authority and her carrying out of worship and sacrifice? Is the nature of a priestess' authority of the same order as that of a priest's? These are only a few of the questions that arise when we entertain what it might mean to have a church with priests and priestesses rather than one with men and women priests.

AN ISSUE OF SHARED POWER

The last I heard, one is still free to contemplate not only what has been throughout history but also what might be in the future. I propose approaching from a new angle a discussion that at present seems to be deadlocked. This fresh perspective has roots

in both Western and Middle Eastern tradition; it is part of our Judeo-Christian story. It takes into account that no matter how we describe the masculine and feminine, they are distinctive, distinguishable realities. It assumes that men and women, although different, are equal.

Perhaps this is the rub. What would it mean if we were to admit that men and women, priests and priestesses, chosen from among the human race, shared power and authority equally? What primitive fear of a suffocating woman/mother would this admission raise to the surface? It seems to me that if we acknowledge that women cannot be priests but can be priestesses, we will place the argument where it belongs. No longer is it a sex-role consideration, but an issue of the authority of God's spirit—speaking in all God's people, to be sure, but speaking uniquely in those who share in the special

role of leaders of those people. Maybe contemplating the possibility of Catholic priestesses would take us away from the issue of male dominance and focus our attention on the issue of shared power. That just might be what it's all about.

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Violent Films Harmfully Affect the Young

Sexually violent behavior, according to police and researchers, is steadily increasing in the United States. There's evidence that at least some of it is the product of long-term exposure to violence in cinema and television. Extremely violent and sexually explicit films "are more readily available than ever before to teenagers and young children," reports science writer Alison Bass in *The Boston Globe*. She adds, "Many researchers believe that the effect of these films may be even more pronounced on children than on young adults." A recent survey of 400 eleven-to-thirteen-year-olds in Salem, Massachusetts, showed that more than half of the movies and videos they had seen were violent R-rated films.

Complains Daniel G. Linz, a psychologist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, "Kids today can see any number of slasher films on video because most video outlets are not particularly vigilant about kids getting hold of R-rated material. And parents are simply not aware of the level of sexualized violence in these films." Linz, in a report published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, observed, "We all have a natural aversion to violence, but these studies show that with constant violence, that aversion goes away."

According to the *Video Marketing Newsletter*, children aged eleven to fourteen rent violent horror films in higher numbers than any other age group in the United States. "It's become a popular party game among

junior high kids to see how much they can watch of "Faces of Death" before they become physically nauseated," writes Ronald G. Slaby, a Harvard University expert on aggression. Researchers say that teenage boys use such films to demonstrate machismo to their peers. Watching "slasher" films with a mixed group of friends, they show delight when their girl friends react with fear or disgust. The girls, on the other hand, seem most attracted to the boys who register the least amount of fear or anxiety. Slaby suspects that gory films are also popular because youngsters have become desensitized to the routine violence they see on television and want something even more exciting.

The Motion Picture Association of America has repeatedly been asked to add the letter V for violence, S for explicit sex, and N for nudity to its R (for restricted) rating so parents can tell why a film has been restricted. The association has refused, contending that changes are not needed and would make the system too complicated. At present, the R rating applies to both a film with a few curse words and a video that shows a naked woman being raped and slashed to pieces with a chainsaw.

Educators and parents who want evidence of graphic violence should spend a few hours watching "Texas Chainsaw Massacre," "Friday the 13th, Part 2," or "Toolbox Murders."

Forgiving and Loving Ourselves

George Auger, C.S.V.

He has taken us out of the power of darkness and created a place for us in the kingdom of the Son that he loves, and in him we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.

(Col. 4:14)

Why do we find it so difficult to forgive ourselves? We have often accepted the forgiveness of God. We have experienced the forgiveness of others whom we have offended. Still, we find it difficult to forgive ourselves.

We say to ourselves, "I, of all people, should be beyond the weakness I experience." Thinking this and similar thoughts, we become impatient with ourselves and even perhaps discouraged. We find it impossible to love ourselves in our weakness. We cannot love ourselves as God loves us.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux learned to love herself, in her poverty, while still very young. She said:

I know for certain that even if I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would not become discouraged. I would joyfully cast myself in the arms of Jesus. I know how He cherishes the prodigal child who returns to him.

Discouragement springs from self-love. The sorrow that discourages is a self-centered sorrow. We do more harm to ourselves by yielding to discouragement than by repeatedly failing through weakness.

The prodigal son was far better off than was his elder brother. He needed forgiveness; his brother did not. We are all prodigal children, yet we foolishly long to be like the elder brother.

For some there remains a bit of the Pelagian heresy that demands self-perfection before self-acceptance:

We must be perfect before God will accept us.
We must be perfect before others will accept us.
We must be perfect before we can accept ourselves.

This is, of course, sheer nonsense. It is perfectionism, or angelism, and, as Pascal would have it, *"Qui veut faire l'ange, fait la bete. . . ."* Self-forgiveness is to say quite simply and honestly, "I am weak . . . I am not perfect . . . I am limited, poor, needy; and because of this I can receive the presence and attention of the Lord himself, who came to be with sinners. He came to give sight to the blind, to open the ears of the deaf, to set captives free—I am all of these."

There is a freedom in not being obsessed with one's own perfection.

TRUST IS NEEDED

When we learn our poverty, we also learn God's

love. When we forgive ourselves as God forgives us, we stop feeling sorry for ourselves. Wallowing in self-pity for one's sins is always stifling. What is needed is confidence, the virtue of trust.

> Be like a little child [St. Thérèse advises a novice]; lift up your little foot to mount the ladder of holiness, but do not imagine you will be able to do so alone. No! The good Lord does not demand more of you than good will. From the top of the stairs, He looks at you with love. Very soon, won over by your useless efforts, He will come down and take you in His arms. He will carry you up.

Holiness does not consist in this or that practice. It is a disposition of the heart that makes us humble and little in the arms of God. Holiness is his doing, not ours! Self-acceptance and self-forgiveness are possible only when one grows in the conviction that one is profoundly loved by God. The first step is not that I love but that I am loved.

Peter, in his excessive expectations of himself, found it difficult to be loved. On at least two occasions, he let his absorbing self-pity come very close to cutting him off from the Lord he loved so dearly. Peter at last saw his unworthiness and cried: "Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8).

Jesus paid no attention to him.

Peter concentrated on his unworthiness, saying "Lord, you shall never wash my feet!" (John 13:8). Peter had to learn to be loved even in his unworthiness. So must we!

FOCUS NOT ON SELF

Mary Magdalen, on the other hand, knew herself to be what she was. She said yes to the acceptance of Jesus—an unconditional acceptance. She concentrated not her unworthiness but on the Jesus she loved and by whom she was loved. She ceased looking at herself and never left the Lord's feet, from the time of acceptance until the morning of the resurrection.

The gospels relate how the compassionate glance of Jesus lifted Mary Magdalen—and, in the end, Peter—from painful remorse to a degree of self-esteem and self-forgiveness that opened their hearts to an ever deeper relationship with the Lord.

Such should be our attitude in the reception of the sacrament of God's forgiveness. We are to fix our eyes and hearts on the Lord's love. It is not so much a matter of my confessing my sins. It is a matter of receiving God's forgiveness.

The focus is God, not I.

> Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Of these I myself am the worst. But on that very account I was dealt with mercifully, so that in me, as an extreme case, Jesus Christ might display all His patience, and that I might become an example to those who would later have faith in Him.
>
> (1 Tim. 1:1–20)

If ghosts of past infidelities rise to haunt us at times, we must throw ourselves into the loving arms of God. We are all sinners, and it is as sinners that God loves us. We must dwell on God, not ourselves. If at times we find little or nothing to bring to the Lord of forgiveness, that too is our poverty.

We all have divided hearts. None of us is so pure of heart that he or she can see God in all things. Very often our infidelities are not of a specific nature. Rather, they are attitudes, a lack of confidence, a failure to see the Lord in our daily living situations and relationships.

How do we come to forgive and love ourselves as we have been loved and forgiven? We must remember that self-forgiveness, like the forgiveness of Jesus himself, is purely a gift.

We must pray for it.

Simply ask the Lord that we may forget ourselves in order to love more fully—simply sit in the Lord's presence and ask him to show us how he perceives us. He is not a harsh taskmaster, but an unconditional lover. He asks us to love ourselves as he loves us.

Lord, let me let you love me.

Father George J. Auger, C.S.V., is presently serving his congregation as General Councilor. A graduate of *Lumen Vitae*, he later taught on the secondary and college levels and then served as pastor at St. Patrick Parish in Kankakee, Illinois.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SUPERIOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THERAPISTS

The letters below were addressed to William A. Barry, S.J., Ph.D., in regard to his article "A Superior's Relationship with a Therapist" (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Spring 1989). The author's reply follows.

Dear Father Barry:
I would like to take issue with some points you made in your article. I am a counselor in an outpatient setting, and over half of my clients are religious women.

First, I would hope that it is the exception rather than the rule that the superior makes the first contact with the therapist. The search for a suitable therapist is often part of the process of therapy and indicates the client's willingness to enter the work of therapy at a particular time. In my experience, there are always trust issues that can mar the process when the superior has previously discussed the client with the therapist.

Second, in regard to the matter of three-party meetings: It seems to me that my responsibility as therapist would be to carefully explore with the client what possible effects such a meeting might have on the transference (in the clinical sense) currently happening in the therapeutic process. My first loyalty has to be to the client. First, a consideration of the source of the request needs to be made, particularly if the possibility of a three-party meeting was not mentioned at the beginning of the client's contacts with superior and therapist. Though the superiors I have known have always requested three-party meetings out of sincere concern for the community member, such a meeting could be an intrusion on the process of therapy or cause a major alteration in the client's ability to trust afterwards. Again, in my experience, three-party meetings are occasionally necessary, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

Third, about setting attainable goals in therapy: we Americans are prone to want quick fixes to psychological problems, which can amount to "band-aid" solutions to deep wounds. Manifest or surface problems evolve over time and lead to work

on the real, deeper sources of the problems. The setting of goals too specifically or too soon in therapy could hamper the "root canal" work and sometimes smokescreens the real problem. Real healing is slow. Perhaps superiors face situation after situation in which a community member needs to get troublesome behavior under management and control, and that is a necessary first step. But it is just the beginning; healing in a therapeutic atmosphere often takes years.

A particularly difficult situation I run into has to do with the counselor's role in the evaluation process of a community member still in initial formation. If the client knows from the beginning that I will have some input or that the superior or evaluator will meet with us somewhere in the process, the spontaneity of the client is already askew. It is next to impossible for the client to work freely and confidentially with the knowledge that such a meeting is impending, and invited into the process and transference are layers and layers of feelings about loyalties.

On the other hand, if it has not been set up at the beginning of the therapeutic alliance that formation personnel will be in contact with me, we have another difficult situation. In general, I have found it is better not to get involved in the evaluation unless it is at the client's request and we are at the termination of therapy. Again, this is because of the alterations in the therapy after such a meeting or contact with a superior.

I do not at all doubt that superiors are motivated only by love for the community member and a willingness to help. I empathize often with their sense of helplessness as they try to guide members in the most humane and respectful way they can. But my point is that caution is necessary, lest the help turn into intrusion on the therapeutic alliance between counselor and client.

Thank you for opening this discussion and inviting our responses. I look forward to more discussion of these very important issues.

Sr. Janet Dohr, C.PP.S.
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Rev. Barry:

After reading your article, I was left with many concerns. While you convey a belief that therapy is a valuable resource for religious and clergy, your assumptions and biases, as well as the procedures you propose, interfere with many of the necessary conditions for successful therapy. Regarding religious and clergy in therapy, you pose the question, "Does the superior have any role?" Then you clearly answer this question in the affirmative. I propose that the answer is "No, except in rare circumstances." In my response, I will address the key issues you raise and challenge you with a different viewpoint.

My perspective on the superior's involvement in the therapy relationship rests on the following critical assumption. The religious client in psychotherapy must be afforded all the rights and privileges of confidentiality due any client. Membership in a religious congregation does not mean sacrificing any of these rights. A practicing psychotherapist has a duty to assure that this happens. To do less is clearly unethical and potentially damaging.

You suggest that the superior know one or two psychotherapists in the area in order to provide referrals for potential clients. Such a small pool of referral sources is inadequate. When one is choosing a therapist, a variety of factors must be considered. In terms of the therapist, the variables include age, sex, experience, theoretical orientation, specialties and expertise, availability, and cost. In terms of the client, the variables include age, sex, past therapeutic experience, and particular problems and concerns. All of these variables need to be taken into consideration when one is choosing a therapist. Frequently it is useful to interview several therapists in order to make an appropriate match. In addition, conflicts can arise when too many members of a congregation are seeing the same therapist and/or when more than one member of a local community is seeing the same therapist. Neither situation is desirable. In summary, it is advisable that superiors have an adequate list of reputable therapists should a referral be requested by one of the members of the congregation.

I have a strong negative reaction to your suggestion that the superior initiate direct contact with the therapist and perhaps give the therapist (even with permission) information about the prospective client. This conveys the idea that the superior and religious are in a parent-child relationship and places the adult religious in a passive, dependent position. It may also foster the very issues that many religious need to deal with in therapy—namely, dependency, enmeshed boundaries, separation and individuation, initiative, self-esteem, self-authority, assertiveness, and decision making. It puzzles me how you can suggest this procedure and yet state that "the client must not get the impression that the superior and the therapist are in league with one another about him or her." How could the client *not* get this impression?

Another issue you raise is that of the superior's involvement once the therapy has begun. While it is my assumption that in most cases the religious have themselves initiated the therapeutic process, this issue is particularly sensitive for those who are in therapy at the suggestion of a superior. You suggest that the superior question the religious about his or her reaction to the therapy sessions and thus provide "grist for the mill." You also suggest that the superior foster conversation that "can also help the religious to face the difficult reality that he or she does not trust the therapist." In both situations the superior is violating the essential boundaries of successful therapy. When the superior intrudes in this way, he or she interferes with the development of trust, autonomy, and control, as well as the development of transference and the therapeutic alliance. This intrusion is counterproductive to the desired outcomes of therapy.

You suggest that superiors "are often a bit leery about asking people about their therapy because they are afraid of being intrusive. But by not asking they may be conveying the message that being in therapy is somehow shameful." In my experience, this questioning can be quite intrusive for the client. The issue here is not how to reduce feelings of shame (this usually happens quite naturally in the course of therapy) but how to enhance a sense of respect and dignity by providing the privacy needed in order for profitable therapeutic change to take place.

Since confidentiality is the legal and ethical cornerstone of the therapist-client relationship, I see no reason why a religious should be treated differently from any other client. Therefore, your examples of times when it is legitimate for the superior, therapist, and client to meet together all seem to describe situations where such meetings are inappropriate. Rather than comment on each example you have proposed, I will describe the times at which it is considered ethically acceptable or necessary for a superior to have contact with the therapist of a religious. The following exceptions to the privilege of confidentiality are in accord with the code of ethics adhered to by members of the psychotherapeutic profession.

The first example is when a client is actively suicidal, and/or in need of psychiatric hospitalization but unable to arrange this himself or herself. It is considered the ethical responsibility of the therapist in such situations to ask the client's permission to contact a responsible family member of his or her choice for assistance in this crisis. If permission is denied, the therapist proceeds, in the most sensitive way possible, to contact a family member who can provide the support and assistance the client needs. In these situations, it is clearly in the best interest of the client for a family member (or,

in the case of a religious, the superior or another religious) to assist in resolving the crisis. It is of critical importance to the ongoing therapeutic relationship that the confidentiality of the relationship be immediately reestablished once the crisis is past.

The second example of when it may be appropriate for the superior to be involved in a session is if the client (or therapist) requests such a meeting. This situation parallels the circumstance when a married person in individual therapy wants his or her spouse to attend a particular session for a particular reason. Of course, the therapist would never entertain the same request if made by the spouse who is not the client. Should a religious request that his or her superior attend a session, it is the responsibility of the therapist to carefully explore with the client the reasons for this request, and it is for the therapist, not the superior or the client, to make a decision regarding the therapeutic benefit and appropriateness of such a session. In some situations such a request may be an attempt to avoid dealing with a significant therapeutic issue. It is also possible that the client has been asked by the superior for a session and is not truly free to say no. It would therefore be contraindicated to have such a session.

Requests from the superior to participate in sessions with the therapist and client when the client is a seminarian or a religious in formation or in temporary vows can prove especially troublesome. Consequently, careful scrutiny of the situation is demanded. Such circumstances frequently move the therapist into an evaluative role that may compromise the healthy therapeutic alliance, which is characterized by unconditional positive regard and acceptance. On the other hand, when the therapist is requested by the congregation, the superior, or the client to conduct a psychological evaluation, the purpose of the therapeutic contact is quite different. In this situation it must be clear to all parties concerned that the therapist is conducting an evaluation and to whom the results will be available.

In situations where seminarians or religious in formation or in temporary vows are beginning therapy, it is essential that it be determined from the outset whether or not *any* evaluation (no matter how simple) is expected by the congregation or superior. If it is not determined at the outset of the therapy that an evaluation is desired, then it is a violation of the confidentiality of the therapeutic relationship to provide evaluative feedback. Even when in the course of therapy the client is in favor of such feedback, it is difficult to believe that he or she is truly free to say no. Clearly this client is in a dependent position and therefore not truly free.

The one area where there seems to be a unique difference between religious clients and other clients is the issue of financing the therapy. Clients typically deal with this issue and even make choices about the frequency of sessions and length of therapy in relation to the cost of the therapy. This is a very sensitive topic, and it is my preference to allow the religious client, assuming that he or she has a realistic sense of the congregation's finances, to integrate this factor into any decisions regarding therapy. However, I realize that certain situations may require some dialogue between the client and the congregation. I would be interested to know more about how various congregations have dealt with this particular issue.

Katherine Mayer, S.M., M.A.
Burlingame, California

Author's reply:

I am grateful to the readers who took time to respond to the invitation at the end of the original article. Of the three letters expressing disagreement with the article, the two published here seem to contain the most substantial questions and to cover the issues raised in the third letter. I must begin by noting that I am pleased to have been taken so seriously by Sisters Dohr and Mayer. An author never knows for sure how his work will be read by fellow professionals. Their letters not only provide a different slant on the question of the role of the superior with regard to the therapy of a community member, and some clarifications, but also give me a chance to clarify some of my ideas and restate my position.

Let me first address the points in Sr. Mayer's letter that do not overlap with those of Sr. Dohr's. Mayer seems to imply that my perspective does not respect the confidentiality between therapist and client. This is absolutely not the case. Nothing in my article should have given any indication that the superior has any right to know what goes on between the therapist and the client. Indeed, if superiors do ask for a three-party meeting, they make themselves vulnerable to discovering areas in which they are in fact the problem or part of the problem. I do not agree, therefore, that my examples "describe situations where such meetings are inappropriate." In the first example, the client told the superior that the therapist had said that the superior was the problem. I know of no way in which the superior can act appropriately in such a situation except by raising the possibility of a three-party meeting. Of course, the client can refuse to have such a meeting, but then the superior is free to continue to speak the truth as he or she sees it. In the example I gave, that would consist in refusing to give the client the assignment she desired. In a case in which no progress is evident, if the religious client refuses a three-party meeting, nothing much can be done. But the superior may have to make decisions that are for the good of the community—for example, asking the religious cli-

ent to live apart from the community for a time. At no point in my article did I even intimate that the therapist should violate confidentiality. However, Mayer's points about the ethics of therapists need to be more widely known; let it be said that her two examples of this are on the money.

Both Mayer and Dohr raise an issue about the use of therapists as evaluators of those in formation, which was not even in my mind when I wrote the original article. I do not believe that a community member's therapist should have anything at all to say to the community about the fitness of the client for religious life, ordination, or anything else. The therapist is the agent of the client, not of the religious congregation. The therapist has no business making any statement to anyone but the client about the client's suitability for religious life, any more than the therapist has any business making any statement to an outsider about a client's suitability to be a parent, spouse, or business executive. When I have been a therapist or a spiritual director for a religious, I have always refused to participate in any external evaluation, even when the client asked me to do so. I believe that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If therapy or spiritual direction has helped a religious or anyone else to be capable of taking on a certain identity (e.g., religious, priest, parent), that should be evident to those who are on the spot, who live with the person, who know what the congregation or the diocese or the prospective spouse or judge expects. The therapist's task is to help the client to become freer of the baggage of the past that is hindering his or her relatively mature functioning in the present. The therapist (precisely as therapist of this person) should not be concerned about whether the church or the congregation or society itself has "good" candidates for its roles.

Mayer believes that superiors should not ask members of their communities who are in therapy how things are going. I find this strange indeed, unless the relationship between superior and members of the community is conceived of as an adversarial relationship. Of course, such an adversary relationship can exist, in which case the superior can become a snoop and a pain. But I would hope that such is not the norm in religious life. If it is, then religious life is doomed, and the sooner we all recognize that reality, the better off the church will be. Mayer says that in her experience, questions such as those I suggested—e.g., "How are things going in therapy?"—are intrusive. I must say that on the basis of my experience, I would find it strange indeed if a superior who has a positive relationship with a community member in therapy did not ask such a question in the course of an intimate conversation. Also, it has happened that I have been able to help the person in therapy to confront the therapist honestly with his or her negative reactions to the therapist, whether these reactions were based on the transference or on some realistic aspects of the relationship or both. To be perfectly honest, I would find it strange if we all thought therapy so mysterious an enterprise that neither friends nor superiors could raise such questions. I do agree that the kind of conversation I refer to can only take place in an atmosphere in which the superior and community members regularly have conversations that touch on the wellsprings of the members' lives.

Both Mayer and Dohr raise questions about the appropriateness of the superior making the first referral. The only response I can make is that other superiors and I have made such referrals, seemingly without creating problems in the therapy. I was speaking of a first referral; the client and first therapist may not hit it off or may together decide that the client needs a kind of therapy that the therapist cannot give. My practice as a superior is the same one I developed as a spiritual director and as a counselor or therapist. Dohr and I have different experiences, but since she speaks from the perspective of the one doing the therapy, a caution is in order.

Both letters indicate wariness about three-party meetings. I share some of that caution, and I too believe that such meetings should be the exception rather than the rule. In my practice, they are extremely rare. But I stand by my two examples. I agree that the therapist needs to explore with the client the reason for such a meeting and its possible effects. If the client agrees to the meeting only because of felt duress from the superior, the therapist can help the client to face the superior with his or her unwillingness to have the meeting. Both letters, therefore, rightly introduce cautions on this topic. However, Mayer's assertion that "it is for the therapist, not the superior or the client, to make a decision regarding the therapeutic benefit and appropriateness of such a session" seems to make the therapist into the parent of the client.

Dohr makes a good point regarding attainable goals in therapy. It can take time to do the deep healing that is often necessary for relatively mature living. At the same time, we have to recognize that therapy can become a way of life. In the April 1989 issue of *Psychology Today*, therapist Paul Quinnett makes a distinction between early goals and long-term goals in therapy, but he still maintains that setting specific, measurable goals is the most effective approach. I realize that there are conflicting opinions on this subject in the field. To be quite frank, the fact that the congregation usually pays the bills for therapy—an issue that Mayer raises at the end of her letter—could have the effect of removing one of the incentives to move toward termination.

Once again, my thanks to both writers for their concern about the issues and for their important contributions to the dialogue.

BOOK REVIEWS

Out of Chaos: Refounding Religious Congregations, by Gerald A. Arbuckle, S.M. New York: Paulist Press, 1988. $9.95.

Paul Watzlawick has convincingly argued that meaningful change is a rare event and is part of creative thinking. It happens through "reframing" —that is, moving mentally, imaginatively, religiously to new perspectives and methodologies. It is more changing the questions ("reframing" implies fresh approaches to reality) than playing once again with the available answers ("more of the same").

Gerald Arbuckle, already known to the readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, has been busy for the past few years with reframing the whole issue of religious life and renewal in today's church. Anthropologist by profession, Marist priest by vocation, professor and administrator by acclamation, cheerful by nature, keen and critically observant of reality by training, he is better equipped than most for breaking new ground. Like many other scientists, he has had a good share of frustration in the face of theologians' and ecclesiastics' inability to take human sciences seriously. Out of Chaos is his best argument so far that we can only gain from a meaningful interdisciplinary exchange.

The first part of the book is a journey through several fields of study. We start off with anthropology (Chapter 1), exploring myth and its role and regenerative possibilities in cultural, ritual, and religious groups. We are taken next (Chapter 2) to the world of management and apprised of certain patterns that are relevant to our main concern. Here we are offered insights on change, entrepreneurship, and corporate tensions. Arbuckle then draws on the Bible (Chapter 3) to help broaden our understanding of chaos and the prophetic dynamism of refounding. The author's views, clarified and supported by case studies, and his familiarity

with current theology make the book not only instructive for our own journey but also a pleasure to read. The blending of fields and the smooth correspondence of topics show once again that integration is not outside us in some theoretical construct. It takes place in the author and hopefully in the readers too, who are invited to be comfortable with the interdisciplinary richness of life—and of religious life. Human sciences, theology, faith, scripture, social sciences, spiritual traditions, pastoral care are converging and interrelated dimensions of reality. Professor Arbuckle refuses, rightly, to keep them apart.

The understanding of chaos is particularly helpful. The symbolic structure of chaos is presented to the reader not only as a feast for the curious mind but also as an invitation to experience it. We are guided into the journey that took many of our congregations to the heart of chaos in order to relive it, appropriate its dynamics, and go out of it with the energy and enlightenment needed for the refounding process (Chapter 4). This is an invitation to transcend chaos in a double movement: backward to the original emptiness or fullness; forward to a new creation. Both movements are essential for the enterprise of refounding, which is the only way to assume and transform the present crisis of religious life. Neither the denial of chaos nor the ability to hide it under the blanket of visible institutional success or simple unenlightened good will can bring religious life forward to new service or new fidelity to God's call in the coming age.

Arbuckle's liberating insight is that chaos is not evil—that at times it is not even a failure, but an unavoidable stage of the ongoing renewal and conversion to the gospel that religious life is. The present experience of chaos has been so acute because we failed to see its normal signs in the pre-Vatican years. Chaos is actually a hope-filled experience because it is the best instrument for revealing the truth of every human enterprise. At the same time it brings the community to new levels of awareness. Just as Zen Buddhism challenges us to see the face we had before our parents were born, Arbuckle invites religious to go back to the emptiness of chaos and through it into God, the

original source, the ineffable origin, in order to see here the true face of our congregation.

The subsequent chapters are of a very concrete and practical character. They offer hints, models, principles, and directives for the arduous journey of refounding in congregation. Chapter 5 defines and describes the refounding person. Because refounding is a corporate journey and religious superiors have a central role in common life, their contributions and challenges are described in Chapter 6. The wider community in which refounders live, where most of the tensions may take place, deserves careful attention and analysis. In Chapter 7, the anthropological perspective is taken to help clarify potentially facilitating or obstructing mechanisms. Finally, general chapters are studied for the same purpose in Chapter 8.

The final section of the book (Chapters 8 and 9) examines a few case histories of refounding persons and processes. This section is touched by the warmth the author feels for those involved and is an excellent means of sharing his hope with the reader, who cannot help but feel encouraged for the coming battles.

This book can be extremely helpful to all religious congregations in facing the new challenges of the future. It spells out the author's creative interdisciplinary reframing of a question that will stay with us for a long, long time, the way all significant myths do.

—Adolfo Nicolas, S.J., S.T.D.
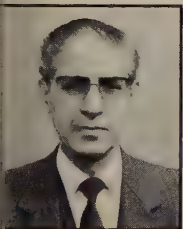
Father Adolfo Nicolas, S.J., S.T.D., teaches in the department of theology at Sophia University, Tokyo. He was formerly director of the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila.

Toward a Male Spirituality, by John Carmody. Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1989. 117 pp. $7.95.

This is a good book! John Carmody, a senior research fellow at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, presents us with a thoughtful book on male approaches to important topics such as prayer, work, and love.

His book is an outgrowth of a paper he presented at a 1987 Villanova University conference entitled "A Discipleship of Equals: Toward a Christian Feminist Spirituality." If the quality of the other conference papers matched that of Carmody's, the conference must have been a smashing success. Carmody describes himself as a writer, and his book shows evidence of reflective thought, discussion, careful rewriting, and polishing.

The first three parts of the book treat love of God, love of self, and love of neighbor. Love of God is discussed in three short, stimulating chapters that suggest possible masculine approaches to Christ, the Father, and the Spirit. Two chapters are devoted to love of self—the self as embodied and the self as spiritual. Love of neighbor is covered in chapters on loving men, loving women, and loving the church.

The first two-thirds of the book is something of a meditation, a musing conversation with the reader, on the main relationships in life and how they might be colored or sharpened by different masculine approaches. If Carmody's masculinity is far from machismo, it is equally distant from wimpiness. We meet a man comfortable in his sexual identity, comfortable with his strengths as well as his vulnerabilities, and open to conversation with his world, his fellow men and women, and the triune God who creates, delights in, suffered for, and redeems us.

The last third of the book, "Making Connections," critiques three books by other authors who have approached the subject from different (Catholic, Protestant, and Jungian psychological) angles. Martin Pable's "A Man and His God," James Nelson's "The Intimate Connection," and John Sanford and George Lough's "What Men Are Like" each merit a chapter. Carmody mines gold from each but is not shy at pointing out what he perceives as their shortcomings.

He is especially concerned about overkill in the use of psychological categories. "Psychological insights may be very precious, but no Christian spirituality to my liking is ever going to substitute them for the image and impact of Jesus himself . . . the many indirectly proposing it argue by inadvertence: Jungian or other categories get the lion's share of attention, while Jesus is treated as a tag-a-long."

Personality typing and testing are also targets for critical comment. "We are not one of eight types, even when we find some help by locating ourselves in a given combination of category and function. We are each a potential dear to God, who easily creates freshly and beautifully. It is no problem for God to deal with five billion unique personalities. God does not need eight classifications to simplify the work of sanctification."

Carmody is well educated in classic and contemporary theology. His opinions do not always cor-

respond to mainstream Catholic thought, and he is often blunt in criticizing the central church. Agree with him or no, what he writes is thought-provoking.

He writes, for the most part, with ease—and with more than occasional flashes of graceful, felicitous phrasing that often yield the happy surprise that he advocates bringing to life. For example, musing on his middle-aged body: "The fragile vessels in which we carry the life of God are not ours to command like computers. They are more like obedient servants who occasionally let us know they are fed up."

I enjoyed this book, and I find it quite useful. I think many men will share my reaction; I believe many women will, too. Certainly it will provide food for thought, for conversation, and for prayer.

—Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.

The Illuminating Icon, by Anthony Ugolnik. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989. 280 pp. $18.95.

In developing a spirituality rooted in the revelation of Jesus Christ, carried in the faith of the church through the ages, and responsive to the times in which we live, Christians have been admonished by Pope John Paul II and others to learn to "breath with both lungs," Western and Eastern. While Western Christians have been gifted with a rich heritage of patristic spiritual texts in recent publications, few contributions to spiritual literature have been made by modern, vital Eastern Christians with a Western outlook. This work should begin to fill that lacuna. The author is thoroughly American, of Russian background, committed to his orthodoxy, and a professional scholar of Western literature.

The book itself is very personal. It reflects a spirituality developed from deep within the American culture, responsive to both the Gospel and a tradition very alien to it. But it is also well formed by orthodox sources contemporary and classical,

and by the author's experience of being a Vietnam veteran, a friend of many Russian Christians, and an active college professor and athlete. The theologian may wish for a more technical book because there are hints of the depth of twentieth-century Russian theology and philosophy. The social scientist may be intrigued by the analyses of the contrasts between the interplay of the two great materialist powers, America and Russia, and the struggles of Christians within these two cultures to retain their evangelical integrity. The spiritual director will be seduced to read further into the modern masters of Slavic spirituality. However, all of these readers will be more enriched by the synthetic, human, and literary quality of this spiritual reflection than by its specialist competence. Indeed, the author gives us glimpses of several more specific volumes that may emerge from the rich and condensed reflections contained herein. The book touches on orthodox and American worship and aesthetics, "civil theology" in the United States, and the struggles of an oppressed church in Russia. The distinctions between national loyalties and spiritual richness, the contrasting (or rather complementary) roles Christology, liturgy, and the Trinity play in these two great spiritual traditions, and the depth of an intellectual development in Christian Russia under adverse circumstances are skillfully woven into a balanced and diverse meditation.

The author is critical of American and Russian Churches, of nations, and of the compromises each Christian and each community must make in their faithfulness to the Gospel. However, this critical stance discloses the spiritual beauty and wholeness of the liturgical community by illuminating the divine that shows through human weakness. The reading of this volume is spiritually rewarding and will entice many to search further into the contemporary mind and spirituality of American orthodoxy.

—Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C.

Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C., is Director of the Commission on Faith and Order, of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

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Human Development: A Worldwide Effort

During the past several years, staff members of the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development have provided workshops, courses, and programs, along with professional consultations, throughout the world. These presentations have been offered for religious leaders, spiritual directors, formation personnel, pastoral counselors, clergy, religious, and laity. Our staff welcomes invitations to travel, especially to Third World areas, as well as to other regions where topics and issues of the type featured in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT can be profitably discussed. Some of the locations where we have already conducted pro-

ALABAMA
1 Montgomery

ALASKA
2 Anchorage

CALIFORNIA
3 Los Angeles
4 Oakland
5 San Diego
6 San Francisco

COLORADO
7 Denver

DELAWARE
8 Wilmington

FLORIDA
9 West Palm Beach

HAWAII
11 Honolulu

ILLINOIS
12 Chicago
13 Moline

IOWA
14 Sioux City

LOUISIANA
15 New Orleans

MASSACHUSETTS
16 Boston
17 Worcester

MICHIGAN
18 East Lansing

MISSOURI

MONTANA
20 Billings

NEW MEXICO
21 Santa Fe

NEW YORK
22 New York

OHIO
23 Cincinnati

OREGON
24 Portland

PENNSYLVANIA
25 Carlisle
26 Wernersville

TEXAS
27 Dallas
28 Houston

VERMONT

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
30

WASHINGTON
31 Spokane

WISCONSIN
32 Milwaukee

BAHAMAS
33 Nassau

CANADA
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